Encounter

January 1975 35p

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A COMPLICATED NATURE (*story*) 3 *William Trevor*
THREE FORGERIES 11 *Norman Cohn*
SINGAPORE 26 *Jan Morris*
COLUMN 35 *R*

MEN & IDEAS

ELIE HALEVY & ENGLAND NOW 40 *Anthony Hartley*

CINEMA

THE LUDICROUS & THE ABSURD 47 *John Weightman*

AMERICAN CHRONICLE

"AMERENGLISH" 50 *A Symposium*

POETRY

John Cotton 10, *John Fuller* 25, *William Dunlop* 34, *Peter Porter* 38, *Peter Scupham* 39, *Jenny Joseph* 82

NOTES & TOPICS

NEGRO SLAVERY 56 *Harry G Johnson*
KARL KRAUS & A PERIOD-PIECE LOVE 59 *George Steiner*

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: STAGE & SCREEN

FREEDOMS OF THE CITY 62 *John Spurling*
A SPACE FOR SHAKESPEARE 67 *Benedict Nightingale*
ORDERS OF MERIT 72 *Alan Brownjohn*
THE GLORY & THE DREAM 76 *Isabel Quigly*

EDUCATION

AN ODYSSEY OF CAMPUS PROTEST 83 *Michael Vannoy Adams*

DOCUMENTS

"Humeur Noire," or the Big Black Put-on (William Raspberry) 92
Loaded Words, (Russell Baker) 94

LETTERS 90

AUTHORS 96

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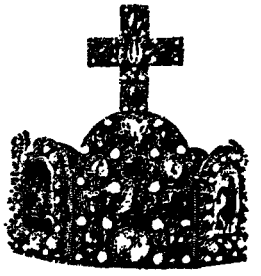

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ROUTLEDGE

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William Trevor

A Complicated Nature

AT A PARTY ONCE Attridge overheard a woman saying he gave her the shivers. "Vicious-tongued," this woman, a Mrs de Paul, had said. "Forked like a serpent's."

It was true, and he admitted it to himself without apology, though "sharp" was how he preferred to describe the quality the woman had referred to. He couldn't help it if his quick eye had a way of rooting out other people's defects and didn't particularly bother to search for virtues.

Sharp about other people, he was sharp about himself as well: confessing his own defects, he found his virtues tedious. He was kind and generous to the people he chose as his friends, and took it for granted that he should be. He was a tidy man, but took no credit for that since being tidy was part of his nature. He was meticulous about his dress, and he was cultured, being particularly keen on opera—especially the operas of Wagner—and on Velasquez. He had developed his own good taste, and was proud of the job he had made of it.

A man of fifty, with reddish hair which had greyed a little, and spectacles with fine, colourless rims, he was given to slimming, for the weight he had gained in middle age rounded his face and made it pinker than he cared for: vanity was a weakness in him.

Attridge had once been married. In 1952 his parents had died, his father in February and his mother in November. Attridge had been their only child and had always lived with them. Disliking—or so he then considered—the solitude their death left him in, he married in 1953 a girl called Bernice Golder, but this most unfortunate conjunction had lasted only three months. "Nasty dry old thing," his ex-wife had screamed at him on their honeymoon in Siena, and he had enraged her further by pointing out that nasty and dry he might be but old he wasn't. "You were never young," she had replied more calmly than before. "Even as a child you must have been like dust." That wasn't so, he tried to explain; the truth was that he had a complicated nature. But she didn't listen to him.

Attridge lived alone now, existing comfortably on profits from the shares his parents had left him. He occupied a flat in a block, doing all his own cooking and taking pride in the small dinner parties he gave. His flat was just as his good taste wished it to be. The bathroom was tiled with blue Italian tiles, his bedroom severe and male, the hall warmly rust. His sitting-room, he privately judged, reflected a part of himself that did not come into the open, a mysterious element that even he knew little about and could only guess at. He'd saved up for the Egyptian rugs, scarlet and black and brown, on the waxed oak boards. He'd bought the first one in 1959 and each year subsequently had contrived to put aside his January and February Anglo-American Telegraph dividends until the floor was covered. He'd bought the last one a year ago.

On the walls of the room there was pale blue hessian, a background for his four tiny Velasquez drawings, and for the Toulouse-Lautrec drawing and the Degas, and the two brown charcoal studies, school of Michelangelo. There was a sofa and a sofa-table, authenticated Sheraton, and a Regency table in marble and gold that he had almost made up his mind to get rid of, and some Staffordshire figures. There was drama in the decoration and arrangement of the room, a quite flamboyant drama that Attridge felt was related to the latent element in himself, part of his complicated nature.

"I'm hopeless in an emergency," he said in this room one afternoon, speaking with off-

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putting asperity into his ivory-coloured telephone. A woman called Mrs Matara, who lived in the flat above him, appeared not to hear him. "Something has gone wrong, you see," she explained in an upset voice, adding that she'd have to come down. She then abruptly replaced the receiver.

It was an afternoon in late November. It was raining, and already—at half-past three—twilight had settled in. From a window of his sitting-room Attridge had been gazing at all this when his telephone rang. He'd been looking at the rain dismally falling and lights going on in other windows and at a man, five storeys down, sweeping sodden leaves from the concrete forecourt of the block of flats. When the phone rang he'd thought it might be his friend, old Mrs Harcourt-Egan. He and Mrs Harcourt-Egan were to go together to Persepolis in a fortnight's time and there were still some minor arrangements to be made, although the essential booking had naturally been completed long since. It had been a considerable surprise to hear himself addressed by name in a voice he had been quite unable to place. He'd greeted Mrs Matara once or twice in the lift and that was all: she and her husband had moved into the flats only a year ago.

"I do so apologise," Mrs Matara said when he opened the door to her. Against his will he welcomed her into the hall and she, knowing the geography of the flat since it was the same as her own, made for the sitting-room. "It's really terrible of me," she said, "only I honestly don't know where to turn." She spoke in a rushed and agitated manner, and he sighed as he followed her, resolving to point out when she revealed what her trouble was that Chamberlain, the janitor at the flats, was specially employed to deal with tenants' difficulties. She was just the kind of woman to make a nuisance of herself with a neighbour, you could tell that by looking at her. It irritated him that he hadn't sized her up better when he'd met her in the lift.

SHE WAS A WOMAN of about the same age as himself, he guessed, small and thin and black-haired, though the hair, he also guessed, was almost certainly dyed. He wondered if she might be Jewish, which would account for her emotional condition: she had a Jewish look, and the name was presumably foreign. Her husband, whom he had also only met in the lift, had a look about the eyes which Attridge now said to himself might well have been developed in the clothing business. Of Austrian origin, he hazarded, or possibly even Polish. Mrs Matara had an accent of some kind, although her English appeared otherwise to be perfect. She was not out of the top drawer, but then people of the Jewish race rarely were. His own ex-wife, Jewish also, had most certainly not been.

Mrs Matara sat on the edge of a chair that he had bought for ninety guineas fifteen years ago. It was almost certainly Sheraton, a high-backed chair with slim arms in inlaid walnut. He'd had it resprung and upholstered and covered in striped pink, four different shades.

"A really ghastly thing," Mrs Matara said. "A terrible thing has happened in my flat, Mr Attridge."

She'd fused the whole place. She couldn't turn a tap off. The garbage disposal unit had failed. His wife had made a ridiculous fuss when, because of her own stupidity, she'd broken her electric hair-curling apparatus on their honeymoon. Grotesque she'd looked with the plastic objects in her hair, he'd been relieved that they didn't work.

"I really can't mend anything," he said. "Chamberlain is there for that, you know."

She shook her head. She was like a small bird sitting there, a wren or an undersized sparrow. A Jewish sparrow, he said to himself, pleased with this analogy. She had a handkerchief between her fingers, a small piece of material, which she now raised to her face. She touched her eyes with it, one after the other. When she spoke again she said that a man had died in her flat.

"Good heavens!"

"It's terrible!" Mrs Matara cried. "Oh, my God!"

He poured brandy from a Georgian decanter that Mrs Harcourt-Egan had given him three Christmases ago, after their trip to Sicily. She'd given him a pair, in appreciation of what she called his kindness on that holiday. The gesture had been far too generous: the decanters were family heirlooms, and he'd done so little for her in Sicily apart from reading *Northanger Abbey* aloud when she'd had her stomach upset.

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The man, he guessed, was not Mr Matara. No woman would say that a man had died, meaning her husband. Attridge imagined that a window-cleaner had fallen off a step-ladder. Quite clearly, he saw in his mind's eye a step-ladder standing at a window and the body of a man in white overalls huddled on the ground. He even saw Mrs Matara bending over the body, attempting to establish its condition.

"Drink it all," he said, placing the brandy glass in Mrs Matara's right hand, hoping as he did so that she wasn't going to drop it.

She didn't drop it. She drank the brandy and then, to Attridge's surprise, held out the glass in a clear request for more.

"Oh, if only you would," she said as he poured it, and he realised that while he'd been pouring the first glass, while his mind had been wandering back to the occasion in Sicily and the gift of the decanters, his guest had made some demand of him.

"You could say he was a friend," Mrs Matara said.

SHE WENT ON talking. The man who had died had died of a heart attack. The presence of his body in her flat was an embarrassment. She told a story of a love affair that had begun six years ago. She went into details: she had met the man at a party given by people called Morton, the man was married, what point was there in hurting a dead man's wife? What point was there in upsetting her own husband, when he need never know? She rose and crossed the room to the brandy decanter. The man, she said, had died in the bed that was her husband's as well as hers.

"I wouldn't have come here—oh God, I wouldn't have come here if I hadn't been desperate." Her voice was shrill. She was nearly hysterical, The brandy had brought out two patches of brightness in her cheeks. Her eyes were watering again, but she did not now touch them with the handkerchief. The water ran, over the bright patches, trailing mascara and other make-up with it.

"I sat for hours," she cried. "Well, it seemed like hours. I sat there looking at him. We were both without a stitch, Mr Attridge."

"Good heavens!"

"I didn't feel anything at all. I didn't love him, you know. All I felt was, Oh God what a thing to happen!"

Attridge poured himself some brandy, feeling the need of it. She reminded him quite strongly of his ex-wife, not just because of the Jewish thing or the nuisance she was making of herself but because of the way she had so casually said they'd been without a stitch. In Siena on their honeymoon his ex-wife had constantly been flaunting her nakedness, striding about their bedroom. "The trouble with you," she'd said, "you like your nudes on canvas."

"You could say he was a friend," Mrs Matara said again. She wanted him to come with her to her flat. She wanted him to help her dress the man. In the name of humanity, she was suggesting, they should falsify the location of death.

He shook his head, outraged and considerably repelled. The images in his mind were most unpleasant. There was the naked male body, dead on a bed. There were Mrs Matara and himself pulling the man's clothes on to his body, struggling because *rigor mortis* was setting in.

"Oh God, what can I do?" cried Mrs Matara.

"I think you should telephone a doctor, Mrs Matara."

"Oh, what use's a doctor, for God's sake? The man's dead."

"It's usual—"

"Look, one minute we're having lunch—an omelette, just as usual, and salad and Pouilly Fuissé—and the next minute the poor man's dead."

"I thought you said—"

"Oh, you know what I mean. 'Lovely, oh darling, lovely,' he said, and then he collapsed. Well, I didn't know he'd collapsed. I mean, I didn't know he was dead. He collapsed just like he always collapses. Post-coital—"

"I'd rather not hear—"

"Oh, for Jesus sake!" She was shouting. She was on her feet, again approaching the decanter. Her hair had fallen out of the pins that held it and was now dishevelled. Her lipstick was blurred, some of it even smeared her chin. She looked most unattractive, he considered.

"I cannot help you in this matter, Mrs Matara," he said as firmly as he could. "I can telephone a doctor—"

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"Will you for God's sake stop about a doctor!"

"I cannot assist you with your friend, Mrs Matara."

"All I want you to do is to help me put his clothes back on. He's too heavy, I can't do it myself—"

"I'm very sorry, Mrs Matara."

"And slip him down here. The lift is only a few yards—"

"That's quite impossible."

She went close to him, with her glass considerably replenished. She pushed her face at his in a way that he considered predatory. He was aware of the smell of her scent, and of another smell that he couldn't prevent himself from thinking must be the smell of sexual intercourse: he had read of this odour in a book by Ernest Hemingway.

"My husband and I are a contentedly married couple," she said, with her lips so near to his that they almost touched. "That man upstairs has a wife who doesn't know a thing, an innocent woman. Don't you understand such things, Mr Attridge? Don't you see what will happen if the dead body of my lover is discovered in my husband's bed? Can't you visualise the pain it'll cause?"

He moved away. It was a long time since he had felt so angry and yet he was determined to control his anger. The woman knew nothing of civilised behaviour or she wouldn't have come bursting into the privacy of a stranger, with preposterous and unlawful suggestions. The woman, for all he knew, was unbalanced.

"I'm sorry," he said in what he hoped was an icy voice. "I'm sorry, but for a start I do not see how you and your husband could possibly be a contentedly married couple."

"I'm telling you we are. I'm telling you my lover was contentedly married also. Listen, Mr Attridge." She approached him again, closing in on him like an animal, he considered. "Listen, Mr Attridge: we met for physical reasons, once a week at lunch time. For five years, ever since the Mortons' party, we've been meeting once a week, for an omelette and Pouilly Fuissé, and sex. It had nothing to do with our two marriages. But it will now: that woman will see her marriage as a failure now. She'll mourn it for the rest of her days, when she should be mourning her husband. I'll be divorced."

"You should have thought of that—"

SHE HIT HIM with her right hand. She hit him on the face, the palm of her hand stinging the pink, plump flesh.

"Mrs Matara!"

He had meant to shout her name, but instead his protest came from him in a shrill whisper. Since his honeymoon no one had struck him, and he recalled the fear he'd felt when he'd been struck then, in the bedroom in Siena. "I could kill you," his ex-wife had shouted at him. "I'd kill you if you weren't dead already."

"I must ask you to go, Mrs Matara," he said in the same shrill whisper. He cleared his throat. "At once," he said, in a more successful voice.

She shook her head. She said he had no right to tell her what she should have thought of. She was upset as few women can ever be upset: in all decency and humanity it wasn't fair to say she should have thought of that. She cried out noisily in his sitting-room and he felt that he was in a nightmare. It had all the horror and absurdity and violence of a nightmare: the woman standing in front of him with water coming out of her eyes, drinking his brandy and hitting him.

She spoke softly then, not in her violent way. She placed the brandy glass on the marble surface of the Regency table and stood there with her head down. He knew she was still weeping even though he couldn't see her face and couldn't hear any noise coming from her. She whispered that she was sorry.

"Please forgive me, Mr Attridge. I'm very sorry."

He nodded, implying that he accepted this apology. It was all very nasty, but for the woman it was naturally an upsetting thing to happen. He imagined, when a little time had passed, telling the story to Mrs Harcourt-Egan and to others, relating how a woman, to all intents and purposes a stranger to him, had telephoned him to say she was in need of assistance and then had come down from her flat with this awful tragedy to relate. He imagined himself describing Mrs Matara, how at first she'd seemed quite smart and then had become dishevelled, how she'd helped herself to his brandy and had suddenly struck him. He imagined Mrs Harcourt-Egan

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and others gasping when he said that. He seemed to see his own slight smile as he went on to say that the woman could not be blamed. He heard himself saying that the end of the matter was that Mrs Matara just went away.

But in fact Mrs Matara did not go away. Mrs Matara continued to stand, weeping quietly.

"I'm sorry too," he said, feeling that the words, with the finality he'd slipped into them, would cause her to move to the door of the sitting-room.

"If you'd just help me," she said, with her head still bent. "Just to get his clothes on."

He began to reply. He made a noise in his throat.

"I can't manage," she said, "on my own."

She raised her head and looked across the room at him. Her face was blotched all over now, with make-up and tears. Her hair had fallen down a little more, and from where he stood Attridge thought he could see quite large areas of grey beneath the black. A rash of some kind, or it might have been flushing, had appeared on her neck.

"I wouldn't bother you," she said, "if I could manage on my own." She would have telephoned a friend, she said, except there wouldn't be time for a friend to get to the block of flats. "There's very little time, you see," she said.

IT WAS THEN, while she spoke those words, that Attridge felt the first hint of excitement. It was the same kind of excitement that he experienced just before the final curtain of *Tannhauser*, or whenever, in the Uffizi, he looked upon Credi's Annunciation. Mrs Matara was a wretched, unattractive creature who had been conducting a typical hole-in-corner affair and had received her just rewards. It was hard to feel sorry for her, and yet for some reason it was harder not to. The man who had died had got off scot-free, leaving her to face the music miserably on her own. "You're inhuman," his ex-wife had said in Siena. "You're incapable of love. Or sympathy, or anything else." She'd stood there in her underclothes, taunting him: tall and dark and beautiful she'd been, like a Rubens creature.

"I'll manage," Mrs Matara said, moving towards the door.

He did not move himself. She'd been so impatient, all the time in Siena. She didn't even want to sit in the square and watch the people. She'd been lethargic in the cathedral. All she'd ever wanted was to try again in bed. "You don't like women," she'd said, sitting up with a glass of Brolio in her hand, smoking a cigarette.

He followed Mrs Matara into the hall, and an image entered his mind of the dead man's wife. He saw her as Mrs Matara had described her, as an innocent woman who believed herself faithfully loved. He saw her as a woman with fair hair, in a garden, simply dressed. She had borne the children of the man who now lay obscenely dead, she had made a home for him and had entertained his tedious business friends, and now she was destined to suffer. It was a lie to say he didn't like women, it was absurd to say he was incapable of sympathy.

Once more he felt a hint of excitement. It was a confused feeling now, belonging as much in his body as in his mind. In a dim kind of way he seemed again to be telling the story to Mrs Harcourt-Egan or to someone else. Telling it, his voice was quiet. It spoke of the compassion he had suddenly felt for the small unattractive Jewish woman and for another woman, a total stranger whom he'd never even seen. "A moment of truth," his voice explained to Mrs Harcourt-Egan and others. "I could not pass these women by."

He knew it was true. The excitement he felt had to do with sympathy, and the compassion that had been engendered in it. His complicated nature worked in that way: there had to be drama, like the drama of a man dead in a bed, and the beauty of being unable to pass the women by, as real as the beauty of the Madonna of the Meadow. With her cigarette and her Brolio, his ex-wife wouldn't have understood that in a million years. In their bedroom in Siena she had expected something ordinary to take place, an act that rats performed.

Never in his entire life had Attridge felt as he felt now. It was the most extraordinary, and for all he knew the most important, occasion in his life. As though watching a play, he saw himself assisting the dead, naked man into his clothes. It would be enough to put his clothes on, no need to move the body from one flat to another, enough to move it

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from the bedroom. "We put it in the lift and left it there," his voice said, still telling the story. " 'No need,' I said to her, 'to involve my flat at all.' She agreed; she had no option. The man became a man who'd had a heart attack in a lift. A travelling salesman, God knows who he was."

The story was beautiful. It was extravagant and flamboyant, incredible almost, like all good art. Who really believed in the Madonna of the Meadow, until jabbed by the genius of Bellini? *The Magic Flute* was an impossible occasion, until Mozart's music charged you like an electric current.

"Yes, Mr Attridge?"

He moved towards her, fearing to speak lest his voice emerged from him in the shrill whisper that had possessed it before. He nodded at Mrs Matara, agreeing in this way to assist her.

HURRYING THROUGH the hall and hurrying up the stairs because one flight of stairs was quicker than the lift, he felt the excitement continuing in his body. Actually it would be many months before he could tell Mrs Harcourt-Egan or anyone else about any of it. It seemed, for the moment at least, to be entirely private.

"What was he?" he asked on the stairs in a whisper.

"Was?"

"Professionally." He was impatient, more urgent now than she. "Salesman or something, was he?"

She shook her head. Her friend had been a dealer in antiques, she said.

Another Jew, he thought. But he was pleased because the man could have been on his way to see him, since dealers in antiques did sometimes visit him. Mrs Matara might have said to the man, at another party given by the Mortons or anywhere else you liked, that Mr Attridge, a collector of pictures and Staffordshire china, lived in the flat below hers. She could have said to Attridge that she knew a man who might have stuff that would interest him and then the man might have telephoned him, and he'd have said come round one afternoon. And in the lift the man collapsed and died.

She had her latchkey in her hand, about to insert it into the lock of her flat door. Her hand was shaking. Surprising himself, he gripped her arm, preventing her from completing the action with the key.

"Will you promise me," he said, "to move away from these flats? As soon as you conveniently can?"

"My God, of course! How could I stay?"

"I'd find it awkward, meeting you about the place, Mrs Matara. Is that a bargain?"

"Yes, yes."

She turned the key in the lock. They entered a hall that was of the exact proportions as Attridge's but different in other ways. It was a most unpleasant hall, he considered, with bell chimes in it, and two oil paintings that appeared to be the work of some emergent African, one being of negro children playing on crimson sand, the other of a negro girl with a baby at her breast.

"Oh, God!" Mrs Matara cried, turning suddenly, unable to proceed. She pushed herself at him, her sharp head embedding itself in his chest, her hands grasping the jacket of his grey suit.

"Don't worry," he said, dragging his eyes away from the painting of the children on the crimson sand. One of her hands had ceased to grasp his jacket and had fallen into one of his. It was cold and had a fleshless feel.

"We have to do it," he said, and for a second he saw himself as he would see himself in retrospect: standing with the Jewish woman in her hall, holding her hand to comfort her.

While they still stood there, just as he was about to propel her forward, there was a noise.

"My God!" whispered Mrs Matara.

He knew she was thinking that her husband had returned, and he thought the same himself. Her husband had come back sooner than he usually did. He had found a corpse and was about to find his wife holding hands with a neighbour in the hall.

"Hey!" a voice said.

"My God!" cried Mrs Matara, rushing forward, into the room that Attridge knew was her sitting-room.

There was the mumble of another voice, and then the sound of Mrs Matara's tears. It was a man's voice, but the man was not her husband: the atmosphere that came from the scene wasn't right for that.

"There now," the other voice was saying in

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the sitting-room. "There now, there now."

The noise of Mrs Matara's weeping continued, and the man appeared at the door of the sitting-room. He was fully dressed, a sallow man, tall and black-haired, with a beard. He'd guessed what had happened, he said, as soon as he heard voices in the hall: he'd guessed that Mrs Matara had gone to get help. In an extremely casual way he said he was really quite all right, just a little groggy due to the silly blackout he'd had. Mrs Matara was a customer of his, he explained, he was in the antique business. "I just passed out," he said. He smiled at Attridge. He'd had a few silly blackouts recently and despite what his doctor said about there being nothing to worry about, he'd have to be more careful. Really embarrassing, it was, plopping out in a client's sitting-room.

Mrs Matara appeared in the sitting-room doorway. She leaned against it, as though requiring its support. She giggled through her tears and the man spoke sharply to her, forgetting she was meant to be his client. He warned her against becoming hysterical.

"My God, you'd be hysterical," Mrs Matara cried, "if you'd been through all that cafuffle."

"Now, now—"

"For Christ's sake, I thought you were a goner. Didn't I?" she cried, addressing Attridge without looking at him and not waiting for him to reply. "I rushed downstairs to this man here. I was in a frightful state. Wasn't I?" she said to Attridge.

"Yes."

"We were going to put your clothes on and dump you in his flat."

Attridge shook his head, endeavouring to imply that that was not accurate, that he'd never have agreed to the use of his flat for this purpose. But neither of them was paying any attention to him. The man was looking embarrassed, Mrs Matara was grim.

"You should damn well have told me if you were having blackouts."

"I'm sorry," the man said. "I'm sorry you were troubled," he said to Attridge. "Please forgive Mrs Matara."

"Forgive you, you mean!" she cried. "Forgive you for being such a damn fool!"

"Do try to pull yourself together, Miriam."

"I tell you, I thought you were dead."

"Well, I'm not. I had a little blackout—"

"Oh for Christ's sake, stop about your wretched blackout!"

THE WAY SHE SAID THAT reminded Attridge very much of his ex-wife. He'd had a headache once, he remembered, and she'd protested in just the same impatient tone of voice, employing almost the same words. She'd married again, of course—a man called Saunders in ICI.

"At least be civil," the man said to Mrs Matara.

They were two of the most unpleasant people Attridge had ever come across. It was a pity the man hadn't died. He'd run to fat and was oily, there was a shower of dandruff on his jacket. You could see his stomach straining his shirt, one of the shirt-buttons had actually given way.

"Well, thank you," Mrs Matara said, approaching Attridge with her right hand held out. She said it gracelessly, as a duty. The same hand had struck him on the face and later had slipped for comfort into one of his. It was hard and cold when he shook it, with the same fleshless feel as before. "We still have a secret," Mrs Matara said. She smiled at him in her dutiful way, without displaying interest in him.

The man had opened the halldoor of the flat. He stood by it, smiling also, anxious for Attridge to go.

"This afternoon's a secret," Mrs Matara murmured, dropping her eyes in a girlish pretence. "All this," she said, indicating her friend. "I'm sorry I hit you."

"Hit him?"

"When we were upset. Downstairs. I hit him." She giggled, apparently unable to help herself.

"Great God!" The man giggled also.

"It doesn't matter, " Attridge said.

But it did matter. The secret she spoke of wasn't worth having because it was sordid and nothing else. It was hardly the kind of thing he'd wish to mull over in private, and certainly not the kind he'd wish to tell Mrs Harcourt-Egan or anyone else. Yet the other story might even have reached his ex-wife, it was not impossible. He imagined her hearing it, and her amazement that a man whom she'd once likened to dust had in the cause of compassion falsified the circumstances of a

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death. He couldn't imagine the man his ex-wife had married doing such a thing, or Mrs Matara's husband, or the dandruffy man who now stood by the door of the flat. Such men would have been frightened out of their wits.

"Good-bye," she said.

"Good-bye," the man said, smiling at the door.

ATTRIDGE WANTED to say something. He wanted to linger for a moment longer and to mention his ex-wife. He wanted to tell them what he had never told another soul, that his ex-wife had done terrible things to him. He disliked all Jewish people, he wanted to say, because of his ex-wife and her lack of understanding. Marriage repelled him because of her. It was she who had made him vicious-tongued. It was she who had embittered him.

He looked from one face to the other. They would not understand and they would not be capable of making an effort, as he had when faced with the woman's predicament. He had always been a little on the cold side, he knew that well. But his ex-wife might have drawn on the other aspects of his nature and dispelled the coldness. Instead of displaying all that impatience, she might have cosseted him and accepted his complications. The love she sought would have come in its own good time, as sympathy and compassion had eventually come that afternoon. Warmth was buried deep in some people, he wanted to say to the two faces in the hall but he knew that, like his ex-wife, the faces would not understand.

As he went he heard the click of the door behind him and imagined a hushed giggling in the hall. He would be feeling like a prince if the man had really died.

Leicester Square : May 1974

Will Shakespeare leans at ease,
his right arm on a pillar topped with books,
his stone cloak unruffled in the breeze,
as constantly across the square he looks,
where letters five feet high,
announce Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*
and what we take to be
the eyes of Dr Eckleburg.
But these are brown not blue?
We look again
to find they are the two
enormous boobs of Jenny,
"a ride like you never had before",
the *Swinging Stewardess*
of the film that's shown next door;
and, as if to stress
the confusion of fantasies and themes,
and, still, a good wine needs no bush,
while *Gatsby* seems
to have no more than lettering,
Jenny's full-frontal dreams
are cut short at the hips.
Though Shakespeare always had it sorted in his head:
for the one a tragedy, for the other
the second-best bed.

John Cotton

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Norman Cohn

Three Forgeries

Myths & Hoaxes of European Demonology (II)

MOST HISTORIANS who were not persuaded that a sect of witches really existed have accepted that the stereotype came into being during, and as a result of, the Inquisition's campaign against Catharism in southern France and northern Italy. They have also been in agreement about the immediate consequences. In France, the execution of the first living example of the stereotype, a woman burned at Toulouse in 1275; the first mass trial and execution of witches, carried out in 1335, also at Toulouse; other similar trials, resulting by 1350 in the execution of some 400 persons at Toulouse and a further 200 at Carcassonne; in Italy, a woman of Orta, in the diocese of Novara, tried and presumed burned some time between 1341 and 1352; further trials and executions around 1360, in the neighbouring diocese of Como.

These particulars are to be found already in the earliest scholarly history devoted to the witch-trials, that by Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, published in German in 1843.[1] They are given very fully in Joseph Hansen's great history, published in German in 1900;[2] and they are still to be found in the most recent histories by the most reputable scholars. They are nevertheless false from start to finish. None of these things really happened. The entire story can be shown to rest on three fabrications, dating respectively from the 15th, 16th and 19th centuries. As what is involved amounts to a major revision of the history of the witch-hunt, the matter calls for detailed exposition—and if detailed expositions can sometimes be tedious, this one has at least the attractions of the bizarre.

A Spurious Source

HANSEN'S INFLUENCE on 20th-century historians has been so great that it is reasonable to start with him. He mentions the earliest case in three separate passages, the most striking of which can be translated as follows:

> (In the year 1275) the Dominican Hugues de Beniols (or de Bajol), who was at that time inquisitor at Toulouse, carried out in the town a persecution of heretics and sorcerers, in the course of which a widely respected woman, Angela de la Barthe, was denounced by her neighbours as suspect of having dealings with the Devil. The 56-year-old woman confessed to the judge that for many years a demon had visited her and had intercourse with her every night. From this intercourse was born a monster, wolf above, serpent below, and human in between. She fed the monster on small children, making nocturnal excursions to catch these. After two years the monster vanished. The woman, who was obviously mentally deranged, was handed over by the inquisitor to the secular arm. On the orders of the seneschal she was burned in the square of St Stephen at Toulouse, along with several other individuals who had confessed to being magicians, necromancers and diviners. . . .[3]

As his sole source for this story Hansen gives the *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, by the Baron de Lamothe-Langon, published in Paris in 1829. The relevant passage in Lamothe-Langon, however, turns out to contain no primary source but merely another summary of the story, accompanied by references to two earlier works: the *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la ville et diocèse de Carcassonne*, by the Augustinian monk T. Bouges (Paris, 1741); and the chronicle of Bardin. On examination these two sources melt into one. Bouges has simply translated the story of Angela de la Barthe from a chronicle written around 1455 by a councillor of the *parlement* of

[1] W. G. Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1843), pp. 180, 186–7, 189.
[2] J. Hansen, *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter und die Entstehung der grossen Hexenverfolgung* (Munich and Leipzig, 1900), pp. 309, 315–17, 326, 335, 337.
[3] Hansen, pp. 309–10. The other references to Angela de la Barthe are on pp. 188, 234.

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Toulouse called Guillaume Bardin. And that chronicle is the earliest known source of the story.[4]

But the chronicle of Guillaume Bardin is highly unreliable. In the 17th and early 18th centuries it was trusted and used by many historians. But in 1742, the very year after the publications of Bouges' history, the great scholar Dom Joseph Vaissete printed it in the fourth volume of his *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, and at the same time entered a caveat. In his view a chronicle so manifestly inaccurate might well be a fabrication, concocted by some unknown impostor in the 16th or 17th century. And although Vaissete went too far—Bardin's authorship is not seriously in doubt—his instinct was sound. When Auguste Molinier came to re-edit Bardin at the beginning of the present century, as part of a new edition of the *Histoire générale*, he too insisted that the chronicler was careless, even somewhat unscrupulous, and not above falsifying his documentary sources.[5]

THESE STRICTURES certainly apply to the passage concerning Angela de la Barthe, for this contains a ruinous blunder. Bardin says nothing of the inquisitor Hughus de Beniols. That detail was added by Lamothe-Langon, who took the name from a standard list of the inquisitors for Toulouse. Instead, Bardin attributes the whole persecution not to the Inquisition but to a seneschal of Toulouse called Pierre de Voisins; and he goes on:

> I have had in my hands, and have read, the sentence pronounced by the seneschal, in which all these things are laid out.

But it is known that Pierre de Voisins had ceased to be seneschal of Toulouse by late 1254, and was dead long before 1275; so Bardin cannot possibly have read such a sentence.[6]

[4] E.-L. de Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire de l'Inquisition en France*, vol. II (Paris, 1829), pp. 614–15. T. Bouges, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la ville et diocèse de Carcassonne* (Paris, 1741), pp. 200–1.

[5] D. de Vic and J. Vaissete, *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, vol. IV (Paris, 1742), Avertissement, p. v. The text of the "chronicle of Bardin" is in the Preuves, at cols. 2–47. For Molinier's comments see the new edition, vol. X (Toulouse, 1885), Notes, cols. 424–36.

[6] *Cf.* Vic and Vaissete, Preuves, col. 5, and main text, col. 18.

From the Preface

MY WORK *began as an enquiry into the origins of the great European witch-hunt. It ended as something wider. It argues that the stereotype of the witch, as it existed in many parts of Europe in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, is made up of elements of diverse origin, and that some of these derived from a specific fantasy which can be traced back to Antiquity. The essence of the fantasy was that there existed, somewhere in the midst of the great society, another society, small and clandestine, which not only threatened the existence of the great society but was also addicted to practices which were felt to be wholly abominable, in the literal sense of anti-human. . . .*

The fantasy changed, became more complex, down the centuries. It played an important part in some major persecutions; and the way in which it did so also varied. Sometimes it was used merely to legitimate persecutions that would have occurred anyway. Sometimes it served to widen persecutions that would otherwise have remained far more limited. In the case of the great witch-hunt it generated a massive persecution which would have been inconceivable without it. In pursuing its history one is led far beyond the confines of the history of ideas and deep into the sociology and social psychology of persecution. . . .

A reader who happens to be familiar with an earlier work of mine, "The Pursuit of the Millennium", may notice a certain relationship between it and the present work. Both books are conceived on the same scale, both cover roughly the same historical period, and both deal with the underside of Europe's history. The two books are in fact complementary to one another. Whereas the chiliastic fantasies portrayed in "The Pursuit of the Millennium" flourished amongst the marginal elements in society—free-lance intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, landless, rootless peasants, the poorest, most desperate elements in the urban population—the fantasies studied here were at home in what would now be called the Establishment. Monks, bishops and popes, kings and great nobles, orthodox theologians, inquisitors and magistrates—these were the bearers of this particular tradition. And the mass response they found did not necessarily come from the lowest strata, either.

"The Pursuit of the Millennium" and "Europe's Inner Demons" are related also in a deeper sense. Fundamentally, both are concerned with the same phenomenon—the urge to purify the world through the annihilation of some category of human beings imagined as agents of corruption and incarnations of evil. The social contexts are different, but the urge is unmistakably the same. What is more, it is with us still; and in the minds of some readers this work, like its predecessor, will prompt reflections not only about the distant past but about certain aspects of 20th-century history too.

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The spuriousness of the story is confirmed by the silence of the contemporary sources. The sole contemporary mention of a witch-trial around 1275 says simply that the royal judge of Carcassonne, Barthelemi Dupuy, in 1274 tried a woman accused of simple sorcery. Perhaps this brief comment prompted Bardin to his flight of fancy. But however that may be, it is certain that Angela de la Barthe never existed. And indeed one might have guessed as much from the details of the story itself. The case has no real parallel in any recorded witch-trial, early or late, but represents, rather, an amalgam of various ideas about witches and about monstrous births, such as would have been familiar to a 15th-century lawyer like Bardin.

YET THE STORY AS GIVEN BY HANSEN is not entirely the work of Bardin. It was the Baron de Lamothe-Langon who turned Angela into a lady of rank and gave her the age of fifty-six; who transformed her judge from a seneschal into an inquisitor; who located the place of her execution as the square of St Stephen at Toulouse. And one may reasonably ask on what authority this 19th-century writer made these additions to the traditional story—had he some source at his disposal other than Bardin and Bouges?

The answer is that his source and authority lay simply in his own fertile brain. In 1823, six years before he published his *Histoire de l'Inquisition*, Lamothe-Langon had helped edit a *Biographie toulousaine*. The entry on the fictitious Angela is clearly from his pen—and it contains, in addition to all these new "facts", the curious sentence:

> The chronicler Bardin adds that the sentence pronounced on this insane woman was still extant in his time. And truly it is to be found in the archives of the Parlement (of Toulouse); all these facts are given there at great length. . . .[7]

So, like Bardin before him, Lamothe-Langon claims first-hand knowledge of a document which, as we have seen, never existed at all. As for other sources, not a word.

A Non-Existent Document

THAT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING of the story. The notion of the witches' sabbat, in particular, is supposed to have been generated by the persecution of the Cathars and to have reached its full development as that persecution drew to its close. By 1330–5 the inquisitors at Toulouse and Carcassonne are said to have been trying women on charges of attending the sabbat and of practising Devil-worship as an expression of the Dualist religion. Briefly mentioned by Soldan, these trials are given fifteen pages of Hansen's history. More importantly, in the massive collection of original sources which he published to accompany his history he printed what purport to be records of the trial proceedings, translated into French.[8] In this case the whole of the material is taken from Lamothe-Langon's *Histoire de l'Inquisition*.

The most striking of the trial records consists of the confessions of two witches, Anne-Marie de Georgel, and Catherine, wife of Pierre Delort, both of Toulouse.[9] These confessions, which are explicitly stated to have been extracted by torture, contain lurid descriptions of the sabbat which the women had been attending, and of the *maleficia* which they had been practising, for many years. But they also contain a distorted version of Catharist doctrine:

> Questioned concerning the Apostles' Creed and the faith that every believer owes to our holy religion (Anne-Marie de Georgel) answered, as a true daughter of Satan, that between God and the Devil there is complete equality; that the first is king of heaven and the second king of the earth; that all souls which the Devil succeeds in seducing are lost for the All-High and remain for ever between earth and sky; that every night these souls visit the houses they used to inhabit, and try to induce in their children and relatives a desire to serve the Devil rather than God.
>
> She also said that this struggle between God and the Devil has lasted from all eternity and will continue for ever; that now one and now the other has been victorious, but that at present things are developing in such a way that Satan's triumph is assured.

Catherine, wife of Pierre Delort, said much the same:

> Questioned concerning the Apostles' Creed and the faith that every believer owes to our holy religion, she answered that between God and the Devil there is complete equality; that the first reigns in heaven and the second on earth; that the struggle between them will never end; that one should choose to serve the Devil, because he is wicked and because he can command the souls of the dead, which he sends against us to disturb our reason; that the reign of Jesus Christ in this world was

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[7] *Biographie toulousaine*, vol. I, (Paris, 1823), pp. 400–1.

[8] Hansen, *Zauberwahn*, pp. 315–30. Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn, 1901), pp. 450–3.

[9] Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire de l'Inquisition*, vol. III, pp. 235–40.

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> temporary and is now drawing to its close; and that Antichrist will appear and wage battle on behalf of the Devil, etc.

The implications are weighty. On the strength of this document it has been widely assumed that the inquisitors operating at Toulouse in the 1330s, being familiar both with the facts of *maleficium* and with Catharist doctrine, combined the two, distorting both in the process, and so arrived at the notion of a sect of witches that assembled at intervals to worship the Devil in corporeal form. By the use of torture they were able to force some women of lowly status to produce confessions in which they described these assemblies and denounced the other participants. The immediate result was the first mass witch-hunt. The long-term result was the creation of a new stereotype, which was to legitimate further and larger witch-hunts, extending from the 14th to the 17th century. All this would indeed follow if the document were genuine. But none of it does, for the document can be shown to be a 19th-century forgery.

The context that Lamothe-Langon gives to the confessions—and which Hansen omitted to examine—shows them to be spurious. For in Lamothe-Langon's history the confessions are presented as part of a sermon preached by the inquisitor Pierre Guidonis in the cloisters of St Stephen's at Toulouse, on an occasion when he pronounced judgment on no less than 63 persons accused of heresy or witchcraft. Lamothe-Langon lists by name a number of personages, ecclesiastical and lay, who are supposed to have been present on that solemn occasion; they include six "capitouls", or members of the town council of Toulouse. But whereas the six capitouls named really were in office in 1335, the inquisitor was not. This is not to deny that Pierre Guidonis existed—he was in fact the nephew of the famous inquisitor Bernard Guidonis (or Gui). But in 1335 Pierre Guidonis was not an inquisitor at all but was the prior of the Dominican convent at Carcassonne. If he was ever inquisitor at Toulouse at all, it can only have been in 1344; and even this is more than doubtful.[10] Nor can the mistake be due to a mere slip of the pen—by 1344 not one of the capitouls listed by Lamothe-Langon was still in office.[11] It is quite impossible that any contemporary source should have listed these men as being present at an inquisitorial judgment by Pierre Guidonis. From this it follows that the document which Lamothe-Langon claims as his source never existed; and the confessions of Anne-Marie de Georgel and Catherine, wife of Pierre Delort, evaporate into thin air.

MUCH ELSE EVAPORATES with them. According to Lamothe-Langon, every single one of the 63 persons judged on that occasion was found guilty; eight being executed, eleven sentenced to life imprisonment, and the rest to twenty years' imprisonment. Elsewhere he states:

> Between 1320 and 1350 the inquisition of Carcassonne passed more than 400 sentences for the single offence of magic; more than 200 of these entailed the death penalty. The inquisition of Toulouse was still more severe: 600 persons appeared before it; and two-thirds of these were executed by the secular arm. These abominable executions continued during the last part of the century.[12]

And in fact the trials listed extend right down to the 1480s. These statements provide the sole basis for the belief, which has by now become a commonplace, that the Inquisition conducted a massive witch-hunt in the south of France, reaching its height during the 14th century and continuing at intervals until late in the 15th. A few simple facts are enough to show that the witch-hunts listed by Lamothe-Langon cannot possibly have taken place.

IT IS TRUE THAT in 1320 the inquisitors of Toulouse and Carcassonne were empowered by Pope John XXII to proceed against practitioners of certain types of magic.[13] But neither

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[10] That Pierre Guidonis was inquisitor at Toulouse in 1344 is stated in J. Quétif and J. Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. I (Paris, 1719), p. 625, on the strength of a single phrase in a single manuscript. M. J. C. Douais repeated it in *Les frères prêcheurs en Gascogne au xiii^e et au xiv^e siècle* (Auch, 1885), p. 453; but he omitted the name from the list of inquisitors (which includes those only rarely mentioned in documents) in his later work, *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Inquisition dans le Languedoc* (Paris, 1900), pp. cxxx–cxxxiv.

[11] For the list of capitouls: G. La Faille, *Annales de la Ville de Toulouse*, vol. I (Toulouse, 1687), p. 73; A. L. C. A. Du Mège, *Histoire des Institutions . . . de Toulouse*, vol. II (Toulouse, 1844), p. 45. *Cf.* E. Roschach, "Les listes municipales de Toulouse du xii^e au xviii^e siècle", in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences . . . de Toulouse*, 8th series, vol. VII (1885), pp. 1–22.

[12] Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire de l'Inquisition*, vol. III, p. 226.

[13] For the letter of John XXII to the inquisitors: Hansen, *Quellen*, pp. 4–5. For the background of the papal intervention: Anneliese Maier, "Eine Verfügung Johannes XXII. Uber die Zuständigkeit des Inquisition für Zaubereiprozesse", in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, vol. XXII (Rome, 1952), pp. 226–46.

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the Pope nor the inquisitors were thinking of anything remotely resembling Lamothe-Langon's witches.

The papal instructions contain not a word about assemblies of Devil-worshipping women; and when Bernard Guidonis produced his classic manual for inquisitors, on the basis of his experience as inquisitor for the whole area between Toulouse, Albi and Carcassonne from 1307 to 1324, he too had nothing to say about such matters.[14] Indeed, the inquisitors showed little enthusiasm for carrying out even the limited instructions given by the Pope. In 1329 the inquisitor of Carcassonne did sentence a monk to life imprisonment for practising love-magic. But that is the only trial of an alleged magician that is known, on solid historical grounds, to have been conducted by any one of the many inquisitors of Carcassonne or of Toulouse during the 14th century.

In 1330 the Pope in effect withdrew the authorisation. He issued instructions that any sorcery trials then being conducted in France, whether by inquisitors or by bishops, should be completed as quickly as possible; that the documents should be sent to him; and that no more cases should be undertaken.[15] Thereafter such trials were carried out not by inquisitors but by commissions specially appointed by the Pope. During the period 1330–50, when—according to Lamothe-Langon—the inquisitors of Toulouse and Carcassonne were burning witches by the hundred, they were in reality confined to their traditional role of pursuing heretics.

There is no doubt about it: there never was an inquisitorial witch-hunt at Toulouse or at Carcassonne. Not only the famous trial of 1335 but the whole saga was invented by Lamothe-Langon. We are faced with a spectacular historical hoax.

The Career of Lamothe-Langon

A HOAX OF THIS KIND fits perfectly into the career of Lamothe-Langon. For Lamothe-Langon was not an historian at all but the author of innumerable vaguely historical novels, with a marked taste for the sinister, the mysterious, and the melodramatic. He came from Toulouse: the countryside and city where he sets his drama of witches' sabbats and witch-burnings were familiar to him in every detail. Also he specialised in fabricating spurious historical sources, which he produced in thousands upon thousands of pages. For such a man nothing would have been easier, or more diverting, than to concoct the confessions of Anne-Marie de Georgel and Catherine, wife of Pierre Delort.

The matter, and the man, call for closer attention.[16]

Etienne-Léon de Lamothe (to give him his original name) was born in 1786, of a noble family. His ancestors included capitouls; his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been councillors of the *parlement* of Toulouse. Along with a number of similar public figures from Toulouse, his father was guillotined in Paris by the revolutionary government in 1794; which, since Mme de Lamothe was a totally ineffective person, left the eight-year-old boy to manage his life for himself. He avoided any formal schooling and educated himself in his father's library, devouring every book he could lay hands on indiscriminately and without any kind of guidance. At the age of 16 he began to write, and within four years he had turned out four tragedies, six comedies, three operas, a novel, and sundry other works. And if these juvenilia circulated in manuscript only, by the age of 22 he had published four novels, including a five-volume novel on the troubadours which was translated into English, German, and Italian.

Meanwhile a tumultuous love-life with a series of fashionable mistresses, first at Toulouse, then in Paris, consumed the remnants of a fortune which had never been large. Lamothe set out to find employment in the imperial administration, and he found it—first as auditor to the Conseil d'Etat, then, at the age of 25, as sub-prefect of Toulouse. He carried out his duties with distinction and proved himself a good administrator. On the other hand, it would be absurd to take seriously his claim that during this period he also laid the foundations of his *Histoire de l'Inquisition* by studying manuscript sources. His appointment

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[14] Bernard Gui, *Manuel de l'Inquisiteur* (ed. G. Mollat, 2 vols, Paris, 1926–7). What magic meant to an inquisitor at that time is shown at pp. 20–4 of vol. II. The sentences of Guidonis himself, as given in the *Liber Sententiarum Inquisitionis Tholosanae* in Philip Limborch's *Historia Inquisitionis* (Amsterdam, 1692), pp. 394 seq., includes not a single case of magic or sorcery.

[15] Text in Hansen, *Quellen*, pp. 6–7.

[16] On Lamothe-Langon, see R. Switzer, *Etienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon et le roman populaire français de 1800 à 1830* (Toulouse, 1962); L. de Santi, "Episodes de l'histoire de Toulouse sous le premier Empire", in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences et des Belles-Lettres de Toulouse*, 10th series, vol. XII (Toulouse, 1912), pp. 87–100.

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at Toulouse lasted only two years (1811–13) and was certainly no sinecure. Moreover, he had no training in paleography; and when he quotes unpublished materials, he never supplies verbatim transcriptions—as serious historians commonly did, even at that time.

Lamothe's administrative career was closely identified with the imperial cause—during the Hundred Days he resumed service, as sub-prefect at Carcassonne—and with the final overthrow of Napoleon all prospects of official employment vanished. He tried to ingratiate himself with the royalists by writing a satirical account of his late master, entitled *Bonaparte*; but in vain. So he turned to writing as a full-time occupation. Under the names of "Lamothe-Houdancourt" (from 1815 to 1817) and of "Lamothe-Langon" (from 1817), and also under a vast number of pseudonyms, he became the most abundantly productive author in France, in an age when many authors were abundantly productive.

In the years following Napoleon's fall the public was insatiable for novels, criticism was at low ebb, publishers were concerned with quantity not quality, and the few novelists who existed were mostly poor devils whose only choice lay between non-stop production and starvation. Lamothe did at least make a great deal of money (which he spent as fast as he made it, or faster) but at the cost of becoming the supreme hack in a generation of hacks. Late in life he commented bitterly on his fate:

> Despite the force of temperament and the mental energy with which I was blessed by our divine Creator, I could no longer carry on. . . . Fifty years of unremitting labour, beginning each day between three and four o'clock in the morning and continuing to two o'clock in the afternoon—labour surpassing and crushing human strength—in the end extinguished my imagination and annihilated my energy.

In sheer bulk his achievement was indeed prodigious—some 400 works, in prose and verse, representing some 1,500 volumes of manuscript.

THE THREE-VOLUME *Histoire de l'Inquisition* can be justly appreciated only against this background. Lamothe-Langon himself made high claims for the work: "For twenty years I collected valuable material . . . brought together scattered documents . . . I venture to call it a truly Benedictine work. . . ."[17] In reality, his preoccupations and methods had little in common with those of the patient historians of Saint-Maur. The *Histoire* appeared after a whole series of horrific novels with titles like *Tête de mort, ou la Croix du cimetière de Saint-Aubin; les Mystères de la tour Saint-Jean, ou les Chevaliers du Temple; les Apparitions du château de Tarabel, ou le Protecteur invisible; le Monastère des frères noirs, ou l'Étendard de la mort; la Vampire ou la Vierge de Hongrie.* Moreover the very year 1829, which saw the publication of the *Histoire*, also saw the publication of no less than twenty other volumes by Lamothe-Langon! For such a man the labour of historical research was clearly out of the question.

IT IS EASY ENOUGH TO DIVINE what inspiration lay behind this particular work. In a pamphlet which he wrote to smooth the way for his history, Lamothe-Langon mentions the *Critical History of the Spanish Inquisition*, by Giovanni Antonio Llorente. This Italian work had been published in French translation in 1817–18, and by 1829 there had been three French, three German, two English, two Spanish and two Dutch translations. Nothing could be more natural than for Lamothe-Langon to try to imitate so successful a production. Only he failed. His history passed almost unnoticed, was never reprinted, and had no translations. Moreover when, from about 1880 onwards, French historians began serious work on the Inquisition in the south of France, they passed over Lamothe-Langon in silence, as unworthy of notice.[18] And no doubt the book would have been altogether forgotten if Joseph Hansen—himself a most honourable and devoted archivist and historian—had not, in the simplicity of his heart, reprinted the supposed reports of witch-trials it contains.

Neither Hansen himself, nor the many historians who have followed in his footsteps, would have been so easily deceived if they had examined some of the works which Lamothe-Langon produced after the *Histoire de l'Inquisition*. For from that date onwards he turned out volume after volume of spurious memoirs, attributed either to figures famous in French history or else to individuals who had been close to such

[17] Lamothe-Langon, *Alliance de la censure et de l'Inquisition* (Paris, 1827), pp. 8, 10; and *cf.* Lamothe-Langon, *Le Chancelier et le censeurs*, vol. I (Paris, 1828), p. vii.

[18] E.g. Ch. Molinier, *L'Inquisition dans le Midi de la France au xiii^e^ et au xiv^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1880). L. Tanon, *Histoire des Tribunaux de l'Inquisition en France* (Paris, 1893).

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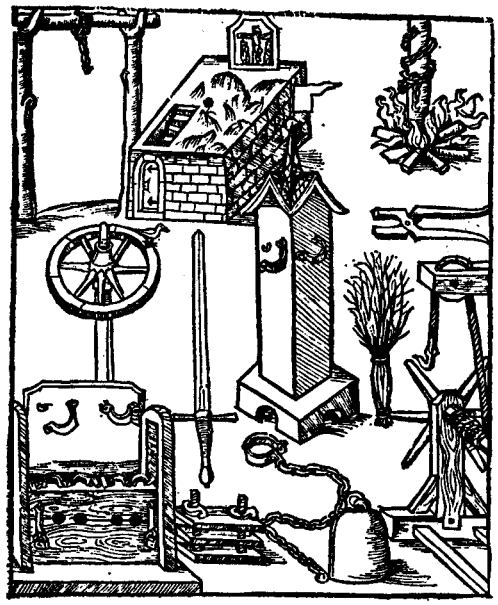
figures. Four of these memoirs, each in several volumes, appeared in the very same year as the *Histoire—Mémoires historiques et anecdotiques du duc de Richelieu; Mémoires de madame la comtesse du Barry; Mémoires et souvenirs d'un pair de France;* and, above all, *Mémoires d'une femme de qualité*, which achieved an international success. And thereafter, although Lamothe-Langon continued to write novels as before, this new genre became his principal and most profitable speciality. In all he produced 24 memoirs, totalling 90 volumes, in 17 years.

FOR OUR PRESENT PURPOSE the memoirs attributed to Napoleon and to Louis XVIII are particularly relevant, for they show that Lamothe-Langon did indeed possess all the skill and audacity required to fabricate and launch a historical myth. Not only are the *Mémoires de Napoléon Bonaparte* (1834) presented as the work of the Emperor himself, but a projected continuation is announced in the following terms:

> Here, without doubt, is the most important publication of the century. There need be no fear that anyone will confuse the great man's authentic memoirs with the multitude of memoirs and recollections that are constantly appearing. . . . These most valuable memoirs were completed on the isle of Elba. Brought back to the Tuileries, they were left in the emperor's study. . . . Later, they were placed in the hands of the same person to whom Louis XVIII had entrusted his own memoirs, about which nobody had ever raised any doubts.[19]



INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE *(Bamberg, 1508)*

The reference is to the spurious memoirs of Louis XVIII, which were also the work of Lamothe-Langon.

As for the *Mémoires de Louis XVIII* and the *Soirées de S.M. Louis XVIII*, it is thanks to them that one specific, notorious imposture, which would otherwise have been quickly forgotten, has continued to intrigue and deceive some people right down to our times. In the 1830s a deserter from the Prussian army, called Naundorff, appeared in France and claimed to be Louis XVII, *i.e.* the Dauphin who in reality had died in prison during the Revolution. The man was quickly unmasked and expelled from France. Lamothe-Langon, however, inserted into his spurious memoirs of Louis XVIII various remarks suggesting that the Dauphin had not in fact perished and might well be Naundorff. He also inserted into other spurious memoirs, attributed to other personalities, passages which seemed to corroborate this view of the matter. And so he constructed a whole body of self-supporting but completely fictitious evidence which still continues, at intervals, to give rise to further outbursts of argument and to fresh crops of books. One such occasion was around 1910. At that time Dr de Santi, the Toulousain expert on Lamothe-Langon, produced a pamphlet in which he showed that the "proofs" of the pro-Naundorff faction consisted almost wholly of passages culled from books which, whoever their ostensible authors, were really all by Lamothe-Langon. Not that that put an end to the affair—a new pro-Naundorff campaign was launched in 1954![20]

FORTIFIED WITH THESE INSIGHTS into the personality and methods of Lamothe-Langon, we may return to his most successful hoax, the imaginary witch-hunt in 14th-century Languedoc. Although in the preface to his history he claims to have studied manuscript sources in various archives, he makes no such claim in respect of the confessions of Anne-Marie Georgel and Catherine, wife of Pierre

[19] Lamothe-Langon, *La dame du comptoir* (Paris, 1844), p. 4 of the cover.
[20] *Cf.* Switzer, *Etienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon*, p. 65.

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Delort. On the contrary, this text is described in a footnote as

> extracted from the archives of the Inquisition of Toulouse, by Father Hyacinthe Sermet, metropolitan bishop of the South.

Now, Antoine-Pascal-Hyacinthe Sermet really existed.[21] Born at Toulouse in 1732, he started as a Carmelite monk and rose to be provincial of his order. He was a man of some erudition, and at one time concerned himself with the history of the Inquisition of Toulouse. Nevertheless, it is highly improbable that he ever made any extracts from the archives of the Inquisition. In the single, 12-page article which was all that he ever published on the subject, he makes it plain that he had not discovered any unpublished sources.[22] That was in 1790, when Sermet was already 58 and had reached the end of his career as a scholar.

For with the coming of the Revolution he became deeply involved in politics. He was one of the clerics who accepted appointments from the revolutionary government—in 1791 he took office as the metropolitan bishop of the Haute-Garonne, in defiance of his superiors. "Le Père Sermet", as he popularly was called, became a most controversial figure, denounced by his archbishop, pouring out political pamphlets in Provençal, taking part in ecclesiastical councils sponsored by the government and even—having conferred on himself the title of "metropolitan bishop of the South"—holding a provincial council of his own at Carcassonne. He continued in this style until 1801, when the changing political climate induced him to retire on a pension; after which he spent his last few years in obscurity and died in Paris. So it is hard to see when or how Sermet could have carried out the labours which Lamothe-Langon attributes to him. On the other hand, by the time the attribution was made he was in no position to comment, for he had been dead for 21 years.

But all this is beside the point. It has already been demonstrated, from internal evidence, that the whole passage containing the confessions is spurious. It remains to consider what models Lamothe-Langon had before him when he concocted it.

Ingredients of the Concoction

PRACTICALLY ALL Lamothe-Langon's voluminous manuscripts were destroyed after his death, but fortunately this particular problem can be solved without recourse to manuscript sources. In the preface to his history Lamothe-Langon mentions that he knew (how could he fail to?) the famous *Historia Inquisitionis* of the 17th-century Dutch Protestant Philipp van Limborch, and that he had been particularly struck by the appendix, which contains a number of sentences passed by the inquisitors of Toulouse. The documents in this *Liber Sententiarium Inquisitionis Tholosanae* not only give the text of the sermons and sentences but list the various clerics who were present on each occasion; and they also mention that royal officials and capitouls were in attendance.

Lamothe-Langon would have needed to look no further for the framework of his fabrication. The sermon by which Bernard Guidonis in 1322 sentenced a number of heretics to various penalties, for instance, would have provided an admirable model for the imaginary sermon which Lamothe-Langon attributes to Bernard's nephew Pierre. Two other works mentioned by Lamothe-Langon will have supplied him with the names of the personages who are supposed to have been involved. An old and well-known history of Toulouse, La Faille's *Annales de la Ville de Toulouse*, gives the names of the six capitouls for 1335, in almost exactly the same order. The fatal error concerning Pierre Guidonis, on the other hand, can be traced back to Percin's list of inquisitors of Toulouse, published in 1693. It is typical of Lamothe-Langon that, having taken both the name and the date from Percin, and constructed a whole melodrama around them, he should add: "By an inexplicable oversight, Father Percin did not include in his list Pierre Guidonis, who was functioning as an inquisitor in 1334."[23]

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[21] On Sermet, see the article in Michaud's *Biographie universelle*.

[22] Le Père Sermet, "Recherches historiques sur l'Inquisition de Toulouse", in *Mémoires de l'Académie royale des sciences, inscriptions et belles-lettres de Toulouse*, vol. IV (1790), p. 46. The documents mentioned by Sermet as having been discovered by the Abbé Magi were published in the same volume; they refer to the year 1245 only.

[23] Lamothe-Langon, *Histoire*, vol. III, p. 231. The reference is to J. H. Percin, *Monumenta conventus Tolosani Ordinis FF. Praedicatorum* (Toulouse, 1693); the error about Pierre Guidonis is on p. 110. The *Liber Sententiarum* is at pp. 334 seq. of Philippus a Limborch, *Historia Inquisitionis* (Amsterdam, 1692). The relevant passage in G. La Faille, *Annales de la Ville de Toulouse*, vol. I (Toulouse, 1687), is on p.73.

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To find models for the witches' confessions he will naturally have had to look to a later historical period, when the new stereotype of the witch was fully developed. An obvious source would be Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges*, which was published in 1612. This celebrated work, which has always been easily available, reveals in great detail the beliefs of a witch-hunting magistrate at the height of the great witch-hunt, and the correspondence with Lamothe-Langon's account is exact. The initial appearance of the Devil in the form of a black man; the pact, concluded at midnight; the witch transported by a mere effort of will to a sabbat held usually on Friday nights, though in the most varied places; the Devil in the form of a gigantic black goat, presiding over the sabbat and copulating with the women participants; the promiscuous mating between the men and women present; the banquet where new-born babies are devoured, and disgusting liquids are drunk, but where no salt is ever to be seen; the cooking of poisonous herbs and of substances from exhumed corpses; the poisoning of human beings and of cattle, and the destruction of crops by means of poisonous mists—all these details are to be found in the pages of de Lancre,[24] and they also figure in the fictitious confessions of Lamothe-Langon's witches.

AS FOR THE NAMES OF THE TWO WITCHES, Georgel and Delort, it seems that Lamothe-Langon took them neither from the 14th century nor from the 17th but from his own times.

Both are decidedly rare names in France—but both were borne by literary personages who lived in Paris at the same time as Lamothe-Langon and who worked in the same fields as he. They were the abbé Jean-François Georgel, whose six volumes of memoirs, published posthumously in 1817–18, are almost as fanciful as the memoirs that Lamothe-Langon was to produce in such abundance; and Joseph Delort, who was a contemporary of Lamothe-Langon's, and came from the same region.[25] Delort achieved precisely the kind of career that Lamothe-Langon had hoped for: he became a successful civil servant, rising to be deputy head of the section for science, literature and the arts. He also wrote historical works of a decidedly romantic kind, at the same time as Lamothe-Langon was producing his historical romances. Lamothe-Langon cannot have failed to know the works of Georgel and Delort, and everything suggests that the names of his two witches represents the private joke of a man who—as the Naundorff episode also shows—was quite a joker.

One feature of the spurious confessions remains to be accounted for: the references to the Dualist religion.

No other witch, in the entire history of European witchcraft, ever seems to have maintained that God and the Devil are equal powers, locked in eternal struggle; or that the Devil is on the point of defeating God; or that this earth is the Devil's realm; or that the souls of the dead belong to the Devil and serve his purposes. These ideas were contributed by Lamothe-Langon himself. As a Toulousain, he knew something about Catharism—indeed, a major part of his history is concerned with the Inquisition's struggle against that exotic heresy. By introducing these distortions of Catharist beliefs into his portrayal of witchcraft he effected a major falsification of history.

In 1828 Karl Ernst Jarcke, writing in Berlin, launched the notion of a society of witches going back to pre-Christian times. In 1829 Etienne-Léon de Lamothe-Langon published in Paris his fabrication of an inquisitorial report attributing Dualist beliefs to a pair of 14th-century witches. It is hard to say which did more to bedevil research into the true origins of the great witch-hunt.

The Witch of Orta: a Private Joke

HISTORIANS MIGHT HAVE BEEN less willing to believe in the 14th century witch-hunt in the south of France but for the fact that the same thing had apparently happened in the north

[24] Pierre de Lancre, *Tableux de l'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges* (Paris, 1612), especially pp. 66–75, 89–90, 128–31, 140, 145, 175, 195–8, 216–17.

[25] On Georgel see the article in Michaud, *Biographie universelle*. The name is so uncommon that no other Georgel appears in Michaud. His book is entitled *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des événements de la fin du dix-huitième siècle, depuis 1760 jusqu'en 1806–1810*.

On Delort see the article in Rabbe and Boisjolin, *Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains*, vol. II (Paris, 1834). The name is so uncommon that no Delort appears in Michaud's *Biographie universelle*. Unlike Lamothe-Langon, Joseph Delort was clearly a trained historian with some competence in paleography. *Cf.* his *Essai critique sur l'histoire de Charles VII* . . . (Paris, 1824), p. 2, and the "pièces justificatives" at pp. 173 seq.

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of Italy. Here the authority looked absolutely unimpeachable: a legal opinion written and signed, some time around 1350, by the great Italian jurist and professor of civil law Bartolus (or Bartolo) of Sassoferrato. In his own day Bartolo's prestige was unique, and for centuries after his death his remained a name to conjure with. Certainly nobody seems to have questioned the authenticity of the legal opinion with which we are concerned.

Nevertheless it is a forgery. This can be proved; and in addition the approximate date of the forgery can be established and the forger identified.

The first modern historian to draw attention to the text seems to have been Johann Joseph von Görres, who summarised it in the third volume of his *Christliche Mystik*, published in 1840. Three years later another German, Wilhelm Soldan, mentioned it in his pioneering history of the witch-trials (alongside the stories which he took from Bardin and Lamothe-Langon).[26] Soon it was being used for frankly polemical purposes. In 1869 Pope Pius IX decided to make papal infallibility a dogma of the Church, and called the first Vatican council to promulgate it. In the furious controversy which this step provoked within the Church, the celebrated Bavarian historian and professor of theology Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger emerged as the most formidable critic of the new dogma. In a work which attracted attention throughout Western Europe, he marshalled the historical arguments against papal infallibility. Here the Bartolo text appears in a peculiarly sinister light. When dealing with the treatment of suspected witches by the Inquisition, Döllinger writes:

> At first the inquisitors . . . took legal opinions. The most famous jurist of his time, Bartolo, writing around 1350, favoured death by burning. This legal opinion, which marks the start of witch-burning, is most noteworthy. Here the evil effects of the authoritarian, crudely materialistic interpretation of the Bible, as practised by popes and their legal and theological parasites, are palpably evident. . . . The papal lawyers ruined theology and the papal theologians ruined jurisprudence. In this spirit jurists declared, as Bartolo did in this opinion, that a magic-making woman must be burned, because Christ had said that whoever left his community must be cast out, like a withered branch that one burns.[27]

Since then the text has figured in most histories of the witch-hunt. In particular, in 1900–1 Joseph Hansen printed it in full in his collection of sources and summarised it very fully in his history—which was enough to ensure its acceptance right down to the present day.[28]

IN ITS ORIGINAL LATIN FORM the opinion is presented as a reply by Bartolo to an enquiry from the bishop of Novara. Minus the references to earlier legal authorities, it can be translated as follows:

> The witch-woman concerned . . . ought to be delivered up for the ultimate penalty and burned at the stake. For she is said to have renounced Christ and her baptism; therefore she should die, in accordance with the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel according to John, chapter 15: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And the law of the gospel takes precedence over all other laws and must be followed even in disputes in the law-courts, since it is God's law.
>
> This witch confesses that she made a cross of straw and trampled it underfoot, and that she made the cross for the purposes of trampling it underfoot. By itself this would be enough to earn her the death penalty.
>
> Furthermore the witch confesses that she has adored the Devil, bending the knee to him. For this she should suffer the death penalty.
>
> She confesses that she has bewitched children by touch and glance, so that they died. It is certain that they died, and their mothers voiced complaints about their deaths. For this the witch should die, as a murderess. For I have heard from holy theologians that the women who are called witches can harm, even fatally, by touch or glance, bewitching men or children or beasts, because these women have corrupt souls, which they have vowed to the demon. But this last point, as to whether witches can harm by touch or glance, and particularly whether they can kill, I leave to Holy Mother Church and to the holy theologians to decide. For the present I do not pronounce on that point, for the preceding reasons are sufficient for this witch to be delivered up for the ultimate penalty, and for her goods to be confiscated and handed over to the treasury of lord Joannes de Plotis, bishop of Novara, who is lord of the spiritualities and temporalities of the town of Orta, where the witch comes from.
>
> As to whether, if the witch repents and returns to the Catholic faith, and is prepared publicly to abjure her error to the satisfaction of lord Joannes de Plotis, bishop of Novara, she ought to be spared temporal penalties and death in this world: there is no doubt that she ought to be spared in that case; I mean, if she returns to the faith, and gives signs of repentance, immediately after the detection of her offence. But if this happens not immediately, but after a lapse of time, I think it must be left to the judge to decide whether the signs of repentance are genuine or whether she is moved by fear of punishment; in the former case she should be spared, in the latter not. I say that this should be left to the

[26] J. J. von Görres, *Die christliche Mystik*, vol. III (Regensburg, 1840), pp. 54–5. W. G. Soldan, *Geschichte der Hexenprozesse* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1843), p. 189.

[27] Janus (pseudonym of Döllinger), *Der Papst* (Munich, 1869), pp. 275–6; Döllinger, *Das Papstthum* (Munich, 1892), p. 126 (revised edition of the above).

[28] J. Hansen, *Quellen*, pp. 64–6; *Zauberwahn*, pp. 334–7

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judgment of the lord bishop Plotis and the lord inquisitor. If however it is conceded that she is a murderess, she shall not by repentance avoid death in this world; but, as I said, I leave the matter of murder to be decided by Holy Church.

(Signed) I, BARTOLO OF SASSOFERRATO.

The correspondence with the picture painted by Lamothe-Langon is striking. Just as Lamothe-Langon's inquisitor was supposed to have found witches at work in the foothills of the Pyrenees, so an Italian inquisitor was supposed to have found a witch at Orta (a village in the foothills of the Alps, north-west of Novara). It was natural that historians should have seen each source as a confirmation of the other. Yet in reality the similarity between the two throws no light at all on historical fact, for both sources are equally spurious.

WITCH GOING TO THE SABBAT (*1489*)

BARTOLO'S LEGAL opinions, or *consilia*, were greatly esteemed, and it is quite true that he supplied them to all sorts of eminent persons, including at least one bishop. After his death in 1357 collections of his *consilia* were made, and with the invention of printing these were published as books. The earliest edition, printed in Rome in 1473, contains only 244 *consilia*; but after years of patient research Thomas Diplovataccio was able to add a further 117, and the whole 361 are given in the Venice edition of 1521 and in all subsequent editions.[29]

But one looks in vain, amongst these 361, for the *consilium* concerning the witch of Orta. That first appears in a collection or anthology of *consilia* on criminal cases by various authors, published by Giovanni Battista Ziletti (or Zileti) in Venice in 1566.[30] It figures there as one of five *consilia* attributed to Bartolo; and in the later Venice editions of Bartolo's collected works—from 1590 onwards—these five *consilia* are included, along with another *consilium* printed by Ziletti in an earlier collection, and twenty-eight not previously printed at all.[31] To examine the first dozen of the 34 new *consilia* is to realise that we are dealing with another ingenious hoax. The great medieval jurist has been used as a vehicle for a private joke.

There never was a bishop of Novara called Joannes de Plotis. Yet in committing this name to print, Ziletti was not misreading his manuscript source.[32] Three of the four other *consilia* which he ascribes to Bartolo in the same collection also refer to individuals with the surname of de Plotis. Even more surprisingly, out of the first eleven of the additional *consilia* which appear in Bartolo's *Omnia Opera* from 1590 onwards, no less than eight are concerned with various de Plotis—*i.e.* the four taken from Ziletti, plus four not previously published. And if, finally, one pursues the enquiry backwards, to the collection of *consilia* on matrimonial cases published by Ziletti in 1563, one finds yet another two opinions ascribed to Bartolo, and both of those involve members of the de Plotis family.[33]

[29] *Cf.* J. L. J. Van de Kamp's study (in Dutch) of *Bartolus de Saxoferrato 1313–1357* (Amsterdam, 1936), pp. 35 seq.

[30] Ioannes Baptista Zilettus, *Consilia seu responsa ad causas criminales*, vol. I, (Venice, 1566). Further editions of the collection were published at Venice in 1572 and at Frankfurt on Main in 1578.

[31] The thirty-four additional *consilia* figure in vol. X of the *Omnia Opera* in the Venice editions of 1590, 1602 and 1615.

[32] Hansen, *Quellen*, p. 56, n. 1, suggested that Ioannes de Plotis must be a misreading of Ioannes Visconti, who was bishop of Novara (1331–1342).

[33] For *consilia* dealing with the de Plotis family: in Ziletti, *Consilia ad causas criminales* (1572), *consilia* v, vi, vii and viii; in Bartolo, *Omnia Opera*, vol. X, (Venice, 1602), pp. 183 seq., additional *consilia* i, ii, iii, iv, vii, viii, ix, xi; in Ziletti, *Consilia matrimonialia* (Venice, 1563), *consilia* lxxxviii and lxxxix.

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To sum up: over a period of 27 years, from 1563 to 1590, Bartolo was gradually credited with more and more legal opinions concerning a family called de Plotis, of the town of Novara—ten opinions in all, and not one of them known until two centuries after Bartolo's own time.

As portrayed in the *consilia*, the de Plotis were a very queer lot indeed, plagued by the strangest worries and dilemmas. Joannes, bishop of Novara, appears four times, and not always as a pursuer of witches. He is, for instance, disturbed to find that a notary, in drawing up a legal document, after originally referring to him as the most reverend lord Joannes de Plotis, has then altered the name to "de Plotis"; and he asks whether the man can be punished for fraud. Bartolo opines that he cannot—partly because in a Latin document it is more correct to use the Latin form, but also because that great and noble family is known to be descended from an ancient Roman, Gnaeus Plancus Plotus.[34] On another occasion the bishop is uncertain whether he ought to dissolve a marriage between a rapist and the woman he raped. Here Bartolo is less helpful, and ends by advising the bishop to refer the question to the Holy See. Yet the tone is encouraging. Bartolo is sure that his friend lord Joannes, to whom he owes so much, will himself weigh all aspects of the matter; for he well remembers the acuteness of mind which the lord Joannes displayed when, together with his brother lord Marcus Plotus, he was studying law at Bologna.[35]

All this to a bishop who never existed at all.

OTHER "DE PLOTIS" APPEAR IN ROLES scarcely less exalted than the bishop's. When the emperor Charles IV wished to ask Bartolo's opinion on a delicate matter of blasphemy, he employed Marcus Aurelius de Plotis to convey the enquiry.[36] As for Count Joannes Baptista de Plotis, he was one of the emperor's councillors. When a German nobleman claimed that Germans were more honourable and noble than Italians, Joannes Baptista called him a liar; and when the emperor asked Bartolo whether this amounted to legally insulting behaviour, Bartolo replied that it would have been unworthy of an Italian, and an imperial councillor at that, to have done otherwise. But the same Count Joannes Baptista had domestic problems. He had married a girl from another noble family of Novara, only to find later that she was related to him within the forbidden degrees. In view of the fact that the count, constantly travelling on the emperor's service, had had little opportunity to look into such matters, the pope declared the marriage legitimate. Nevertheless, when the count died the question arose as to whether his children could inherit; Bartolo opined that they could.

Yet not all de Plotis were above reproach. Bartolo is sharp with Joannes Aloysius de Plotis, mayor of Milan, who had wrongfully imprisoned Hector de Mapamundis (meaning "Map of the World") for an offence committed by Hector's brother. Moreover, in challenging Joannes Maria de Plotis to a duel, Count Sebastianus de Plotis undoubtedly offended against the ancient statutes of Novara, which Petrus de Plotis in his day had helped to draw up. It was fortunate for him that Fabianus de Plotis heard him say that he had forgotten about the challenge; for this enabled Bartolo to take a lenient view.[37]

SUCH IS THE TRUE BACKGROUND of the witch of Orta. For some three centuries, until medievalists and anti-papal propagandists discovered her and found in her what they wanted to find, she was simply a minor character in a preposterous family saga. How this saga was ever accepted as the work of Bartolo is a mystery. Even apart from the absurdity of most of the incidents, the Latin style is utterly unlike his, and even the signature appended to each *consilium* —"Ego, Bartolus de Saxoferrato"—is one he never used. One can only assume that no scholar ever read these fragmented materials with enough attention to realise that they form a whole, and that that whole is a parody.

Who was the parodist?

No hint is given in the *Omnia Opera* of Bartolo, or in the work from which the faked *consilia* in the *Omnia Opera* were drawn—the collection of opinions on criminal cases first published by Ziletti in 1572. But if one inspects the two *consilia* which, though attributed to Bartolo, never reappeared in the *Omnia Opera*, one finds the answer. These are the *consilia* in Ziletti's collection of matrimonial cases, first published in 1563. In each the rubric states that, though written by

[34] Bartolo, *Omnia Opera*, p. 185, additional *consilium* iv.
[35] Ziletti, *Consilia matrimonialia*, pp. 350–2, *consilium* lxxxix.
[36] Bartolo, *Omnia Opera*, p. 187, *consilium* vii.
[37] Bartolo, *Omnia Opera*, p. 183, *consilium* i; p. 184, *consilium* iv; p. 189, *consilium* viii.

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Bartolo, the opinion has only now been brought to light by the illustrious doctor of both laws "Ioannes Baptista de Plotis."

Giovanni Battista Piotto, or de' Ploti, as he is variously called by Italian historians, was a prominent citizen of Novara in the second half of the 16th century.[38] A nobleman and landed proprietor, he was also a respected jurist, a pupil of the celebrated Andrea Alciati. Novara was at that time under the protection of Milan, which was itself a dependency of the Spanish crown; and Piotto acted for many years as Novara's spokesman in Milan. He was zealous in defending Novara's rights and privileges—it was thanks to him that the Spaniards desisted from demolishing the suburbs; and in due course his fellow-citizens acknowledged his services by bestowing on him the title of *padre della patria*. He was also a great producer of *consilia*—those published number more than a hundred.

These *consilia* turn a near-certainty into a certainty. Nobody who studies them can doubt that Piotto was the forger of the pseudo-Bartolean *consilia* and the creator of the Witch of Orta. It is not simply that the Latin style is so similar—just like the pseudo-Bartolean *consilia*, some of the *consilia* which Piotto wrote over his own name deal with the affairs of his family, and with fictitious affairs at that.[39] To appreciate the spirit in which these documents were concocted one has only to compare No. 87 in Ziletti's "matrimonial" collection, published first in 1563, with No. 15 in Piotto's collection of his own *consilia*, published in 1578.[40] The former tells how Giovanni Battista's son, Francesco Maria, made his own daughter his sole heir on condition that, when she reached marriageable age, she should marry the worthiest member of the de Plotis family. When the time came, a furious dispute arose as to whether she had not infringed the condition by marrying a jurist de Plotis when she could have had a soldier de Plotis, or even a doctor of arts and medicine. As a good jurist Giovanni Battista naturally opines that his niece has done very right. In the 1578 volume the same *consilium* reappears—but the family is now called not de Plotis but Sempronius!

Piotto seems to have written many of his *consilia* simply to exercise his skill in resolving nice points of law, or maybe to display his legal erudition. Others are obviously meant to be read as jokes—sophisticated professional jokes, comparable with the great satire on legal pedantry, the judgment of Judge Bridoye, which occupies three chapters in the *Third Book* of Rabelais. The Piottos were a family of lawyers—Francesco Maria was one, and there were others. The existence of this captive audience is perhaps enough to account for the virtuoso displays and recondite fooleries which Giovanni Battista perpetrated in his own name. But by 1563 he had hit on a new idea. He stopped writing about his son and began, instead, to concoct *consilia* about imaginary ancestors of his, which he passed off as the work of Bartolo.

HOW DID HE MANAGE to get them published? Above all, how did it come about that in the end they were even incorporated into new editions of Bartolo's collected works?

Here the role of the jurist, editor and compiler Giovanni Battista Ziletti must have been decisive. After all, six of the forgeries were first published in his collections. And when four of the six were taken into Bartolo's *Omnia Opera* it happened in Venice, where Ziletti lived and worked. They do not figure in the Basel edition of 1589, but they do figure in the Venice edition of 1590, as they do also in the later Venice editions of 1603 and 1615. Indeed, the editors of the *Omnia Opera* explicitly acknowledge that these *consilia* had previously appeared in Ziletti's collection. But even in the forgeries which appear for the first time in the *Omnia Opera*, the influence of Ziletti can be detected in the background: a *consilium* which mentions Marcus Aurelius de Plotis is immediately followed by a note by Ziletti, which in turn refers to a treatise by our Piotto.

There seems to have been a close understanding between the two men, and one feels that Piotto knew what he was doing when he described Ziletti as

> that most learned doctor of Venice . . . zealous for public rather than private profit, bringing together many things in civil law with great labour and with a genius which is divine rather than merely human, transmitting the *consilia* of various doctors . . . to print and so to immortality . . . .[41]

[38] On Giovanni Battista Piotto see C. Morbio, *Storia della Città e Diocesi di Novara* (Milan, 1841), p. 229, and A. Rusconi *et al.*, *Monografie Novaresi* (Novara, 1877), pp. 51–2.

[39] Examples are in an earlier collection by Ziletti, *Criminalia consilia atque responsa*, vol. I (Venice, 1559), pp. 289–312, *consilia* cviii and cix. See also the following Note.

[40] Ziletti, *Consilia matrimonialia*, pp. 292–6, *consilium* lxxxvii; Ioannes Baptista Plotus, *Consilia sive responsa* (Novara, 1578), pp. 78–81, *consilium* xv.

[41] In Ziletti, *Consilia . . . ad causas criminales* (1572), p. 158.

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Certainly Piotto and Ziletti were jointly responsible for launching, in 1572, the text which has misled so many historians into believing that inquisitors were hunting witches in the diocese of Novara more than two centuries earlier.

IT IS TRUE THAT THE WITCH OF ORTA does not stand entirely alone. Around 1508 one Bernardo Rategno, who was then inquisitor for the neighbouring diocese of Como, wrote that "the sect of witches began to pullulate only within the last 150 years, as appears from the old records of trials by inquisitors, in the archives of our Inquisition at Como."[42] This seemed to confirm that inquisitorial witch-hunting in that neighbourhood could indeed be traced back to the 1350s. However, no later writer has found any trace of the documents in question, though the archives of Como have been searched by historians who had these matters in mind.[43]

The earliest witch-hunts established as having taken place in that area date from a full century later—from the 1450s in the Val Leventina, from the 1480s in Como itself. As for Rategno (otherwise known as Bernard of Como), he was appointed inquisitor only after a lifetime spent as a preacher, but during the years left to him he earned himself a reputation as a ruthless hunter of witches. Indeed, the passage in question comes from a tract written specially to prove that witches exist and ought to be burned.[44] No serious modern historian would have taken the statement at its face value if it had not appeared to be supported by other evidence, Italian and French. With that evidence discredited, and no other evidence forthcoming, the 14th-century witch-hunt at Como loses all credibility.

Nevertheless Rategno's comment is not irrelevant to the matter in hand. Though he himself died in 1516, his tract remained unknown for half-a-century. It was first published as an appendix to a larger work, also by Rategno, on the procedure to be adopted by inquisitors in dealing with heretics; and that was in 1566, at Milan. In the tract, witches are described as women who, in addition to killing adults and children, bow down to the Devil and—not an invariable characteristic of witches—trample on the cross. Now, Piotto lived and worked in Milan. As a lawyer who himself wrote several *consilia* about the treatment of heretics, he would hardly have overlooked an inquisitor's manual published in that very city. In the manual he would have found an assurance that 150 years earlier—*i.e.* in Bartolo's time—witch-hunts were taking place in the neighbourhood. Is it mere coincidence that that same year 1566 saw the publications of his pseudo-Bartolean *consilium* about the witch of Orta who killed children, bowed down to the Devil, trampled on the cross, and must pay for it by being burned alive? Instead of confirming the story of the witch of Orta, Rategno's statement may very well have inspired it.

Between them, Bardin (in the 15th century), Rategno and Piotto (in the 16th), and Lamothe-Langon (in the 19th) opened up what for long looked like a royal road to the origins of the great witch-hunt. It has turned out to be no such thing but, on the contrary, a false and decidedly muddy track.

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[42] Bernard of Como, *Tractatus de strigiis* (Milan, 1566), (an appendix to the author's *Lucerna Inquisitorum)*. The tract is reprinted, from a later edition, in Hansen's *Quellen*, pp. 279–84. Hansen's dating of around 1508 is altogether plausible, and other suggestions that have been made—for instance, the 1480s—do not fit with what is known of Bernard's life.

[43] *Cf.* C. Cantù, *Storia della città e diocesi di Como*, vol. I (Como, 3rd rev. edn., 1899), pp. 477–85.

[44] For an outline of Rategno's biography see Hansen, *Quellen*, pp. 279–80. For his reputation as a witch-hunter see the Latin verses by Benedetto Giovio, of Como, quoted by Cantù, *Storia*, p. 485. They were written before 1529.

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John Fuller

Evening signs at Gallt-Y-Ceiliog

Why here? Have we stopped pretending not to notice?
Glance up to the window: something has just disappeared.
Try to read, and find it clamouring for attention.

The house is establishing its relations with the hill,
Its corners not its sides at compass points,
The hill edging it out into the sun.

The evening chaffinch scours for basking grubs.
The long-shadowed flock squeeze their tattoos of dung
Like dropped jewels pattering on the gravel.

What does the house know, patient of all its creatures?
Patient of bird and sheep and the small movements
Of uncollected insects and the first bat?

It must be the hill's secret, older than the stones
Which make the spaces we furnish with our laughter
And chill the natural warmth of turf and spray.

The chairs are angled for conversation like
A stage set. A hand writes, detached and horrible.
One more bottle and the mountain will be level!

Why here? Is it something about to come or to go?
The house knows nothing, neither does the hill.
The creatures walk in their created shadows

Noiseless as the burning tread to the west of the sun
Returning from its career as a minor god,
Parting the sea, coming at last to land.

Why here? The meeting-place of all the made
And unmade, is it, a point of old discomfort?
The signs are upon us, friends. We've no roots here.

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Jan Morris

Singapore

AND ON FROM thence, I misquoted to myself as I boarded the aircraft in Hong Kong, and on from thence to Singapore: and though the Lion City is hardly a garden of the sun, at least it is distinctly golden, and possesses a mingled allure of the rapacious, the aggressive, the repellent and the extraordinary that any true pilgrim would relish. We live in a world of alignments and conformities: for the professional traveller there is nothing more agreeable than to reach, like the desert caravans of old, a place that is altogether on its own, ramparted, defiant and *sui generis*. Such a place, like it or not, is undeniably the Republic of Singapore. It is like nowhere else. It lives adventurously. It is equally admired and detested. It glitters in the anticipation. It is the last of the City-States—or perhaps, gnomically speaking, the first.

NO ATHENS, THOUGH, or Florence. Flat, steamy, thickly humid the island lies there in its hot seas, fringed with mangrove swamps, and from the air it looks as it always did, a slightly desperate place that ought to be uninhabited. It looks an invented place, and so of course it is: for it was created by the British virtually out of nothing, to consolidate their command of the Eastern trade. Only a handful of Malays, Chinese farmers, and peripatetic seamen lived uncomfortably on Singapura when Stamford Raffles bought it from Chief Temonggong and Tengku Long of Johore. The island was brought to life by the alchemy of Empire.

The artifacts of the British still show down there, adjusting geography as they so often did. There is the Johore Causeway, still the one link with the Malay peninsula, which the imperialists built to connect the island with their protectorates upon the mainland. There is the naval base upon the Johore Strait, one of the last great military works of the British Empire. There the island roads converge, as they do in many another imperial island, upon the sprawl of the seaport around its harbour. There are the jostling sampans still, like a log-jam in the Singapore River, and there is the assembly of ships in the roadsteads, fussed about by launches, tugs and bumboats, that the magnetism of Empire first attracted to this fulcrum of the Eastern seas.

For most Britons of a certain age, I suppose, Singapore remains Raffles' island to this day. But it is poignantly true that although no possession of the old Empire was more dashingly acquired, romantically conceived, or successfully developed, still in historical terms Singapore remains a figure of all that was fustiest and snobbiest in the colonial Empire, all that went with baggy shorts and ridiculous moustaches, with servant problems and Sunday sing-songs at the Seaview, with tennis clubs and beer and elevenses at Robinsons —with everything that was most bourgeois about the declining Empire, and in the end with everything that was most flaccid. Singapore was the archetype of Somerset Maugham's Empire, Noël Coward's Empire—an Empire that had lost its purpose, its confidence and its will. When the island fell to the Japanese in 1942, in effect the Empire fell, and the idea of Empire too.

JAN MORRIS's *reportage from Hong Kong appeared in the July* ENCOUNTER. *Illustrations are by Richard Willson.*

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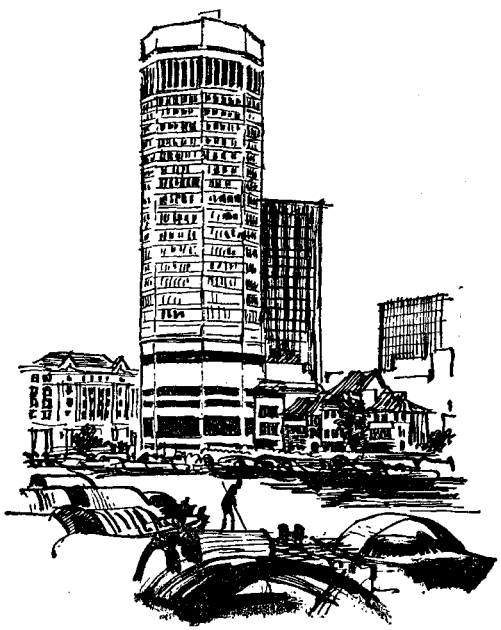
A HOMING INSTINCT led me direct to the core of this dead colony, the downtown expanse of green called the Padang, and there without surprise I discovered that the imperial ghosts live on. There was a warm nostalgic smell of mown grass. The last post-prandial members of the Singapore Cricket Club were sitting with their gin-slings on the verandah, white linen hats over their eyes. The Anglican cathedral still stood fretted but handsome in its close, with small Anglican-looking cars parked outside its offices, and large Anglican-looking ladies coordinating arrangements in its porch. Ineffably conceited barristers, direct from Lincoln's Inn, adjusted their wing-collars or tilted their wigs beneath the colonnade of the Supreme Court. Civil servants with brief-cases hurried preoccupied into the great offices of Government from whose windows, during a century of British rule, expatriate administrators looked out with pride or loathing across the tropic green.



Away to the west, over Anderson Bridge, the lumpish structures of imperial capitalism still breathed the spirit of the 1930s, so that I half-expected to see Oxford bags and monocles emerging from their revolving doors, or wives in pink cloche hats dropping in on Reggie. Away to the east stood the glorious palms of Raffles Hotel, the Shepheards of the East, where the Maughams drank and the Cowards fizzed, where the gin sling was invented, where there was a Free Dark Room for Amateur Photographers, and Hotel Runners Boarded All In-Coming Steamers, where Admiral Skrydloff and the Duke of Newcastle stayed, where generations of Malayan planters intrigued their leaves away, and not a few planters' wives began their tearful journeys home to Mother.

It is all there still. There are no Britons in those offices of Government. Those barristers are mostly Indian. The Finest Organ in the East no longer plays for Lady Timsbury's Charity Balls at the Victoria Memorial Hall. The spindrift ensigns of the regiments have been removed from the Cathedral. Even Raffles, in an uncharacteristically philistine moment, recently lowered the ceilings of its vast bedrooms, where the iron fans used to creak and swirl through the nights of exile or ecstasy. Yet those ghosts wander there still, mostly dead but sometimes alive, and the ethos of the fading Empire, threadbare, raffish, gone to seed, well-meaning, lingers there forlornly.

IT WAS FROM THE PADANG that the humiliated tuans and their wives, mustered by the Japanese, began their march to Changi Prison and often to death: and if I closed my eyes, I thought, I could still hear their voices in the sunshine, courageous or querulous, insisting upon water for the dogs or bursting bravely into *There'll Always Be An England.* The British Empire went out with a whimper, assiduously though we have disguised the fact even to ourselves, and in Singapore especially it faded away in pathos—or worse still, bathos, for the generals were second-rate, the songs were banal, the policies were ineffectual, and even the courage was less than universal.

I find this mixture very moving—the imperial energies debased and enervated, like a very exclusive sport when the masses take it over. Singapore fell partly because its defence was timid and inept, but partly because its rulers did not wish to put at risk the lives of their indigenous subjects: it was an attitude indecisive but not altogether ignoble, and translated to a wider sphere, it meant that the Empire had outlived itself. My *Whitaker's Almanack* for 1945 records Singapore as being "temporarily in hostile Japanese occupation"; but though that "temporarily" proved true, and the British did raise their flag again above the Padang, still things could never be the same again. The good of Empire, like the bad, depended upon force and the will to use it. By 1945 the British had lost that will for ever, and for that matter the force as well.

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IN A MASOCHISTIC MOMENT I determined to visit the exact spot where, on 15 February 1942, was sealed the fate of Singapore and thus of the British Empire—which Churchill himself, only a year or two before, had conjectured might last a thousand years. The Japanese had then captured most of the island, but had only penetrated the outskirts of Singapore City. Short of fuel and ammunition, they were exerting their will upon the hapless British more by bluff than by superior power. They were on a winning streak, the British unmistakably on a losing. At seven o'clock that evening General Percival, wearing his steel helmet and long shorts, walked along the Bukit Timah road to meet General Yamashita at the Ford Motor Company factory, and surrender Raffles' island to the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The factory has not much changed since then. The buildings are still modest, low and rather drab, and the man at the gate still raises his barrier with that faintly military manner so characteristic of lesser functionaries under British colonial rule. Inside the offices have been shifted around somewhat, and separated with glass partitions, and the room in which the surrender was signed has been divided into two. Nevertheless, they said, as they showed me into a fairly gloomy, wood-panelled and teak-furnished executive chamber, this was the very place where the surrender was signed. Even the furniture was the same. Here sat Percival and his three staff officers, hangdog and exhausted, hopelessly, almost obsequiously asking for more time. Here sat the bullish Yamashita in his medal ribbons and open-necked shirt—"All I want to know is, do you surrender unconditionally or not? Yes or no?" Japanese war correspondents and military photographers jostled all around the table; Yamashita's generals sat impassive beside him. I could see the tired eyes of the British officers, flinching in the flare of the flash-bulbs, as Percival accepted the terms with a limp "Yes", and the papers were signed—by Yamashita in a bold flourish, by Percival in a cramped schoolboyish hand with what I would surmise to be a Conway Stewart 2/6d Fountain Pen.

I felt ashamed to be there, and sorry; and I wished poor General Percival happier campaigning in his after-life—"he looked so pale and thin and ill", said General Yamashita later, before they hanged him for his war crimes. Did many British visitors come to see the room? I asked the Ford people. Not very many, they said, very few in fact. But seldom a day went by without a coach-load of Japanese tourists stopping at the factory gate, while their guides pointed out the historic window, and the cameras unanimously clicked.

SINGAPORE IS a harbour, and when the British went, the harbour stayed. One afternoon I rented a sampan, and chugged with a couple of friends to an off-shore island called Sakijang Bendera, which looked enticing on the map. It took a long time to get there. The ignition keys were missing. The engine wouldn't start. The boatman remembered some unfinished business on the next pier but one. The sampan, though sturdy, was not swift. Spray got in our eyes, oil got on our skirts, the heat blazed mercilessly down, warming the water like a tepid bath and blurring the horizons in mirage. Once a tropical storm burst violently over us, and sometimes the boatman made despondent grunting noises, as though he wished he had never come.

But this is the right way to experience the harbour of Singapore—sweating, soaked, oiled, delayed, slightly irritated. These are the conditions of the place, and best illustrate its origins and meanings. Raffles chose the island as his new entrepôt because he recognised it as the ideal staging-post on the Oriental shipping routes, commanding the narrow straits by which shipping must pass from the Indian Ocean to the China Sea. Here, 100 miles north of the Equator, the Indian, the Chinese, and the Polynesian worlds meet, and the great trade routes converge. It is Conrad country, where the seamen of every nation clamber ashore for their pleasures at Connaught Pier, the coasters labour in from Borneo and Java, and the original Bill Bailey ignored all requests to go home from his celebrated bar in Cuppage Road. The average noonday temperature of Singapore is 87 degrees Fahrenheit, and the population is a heady mixture of the Eastern races, packed tumultuously around the great port as in a huge bazaar.

All about us, as we proceeded jerkily towards the open sea, ships and islands lay. The islands were green with palms and mangroves, and suggestive with the remains of fortifications. The ships were anchored row by row, like a city of ships, some high in the water, some deep with merchandise, from Monrovia and from Panama, from Liverpool and from Yokohama; and from

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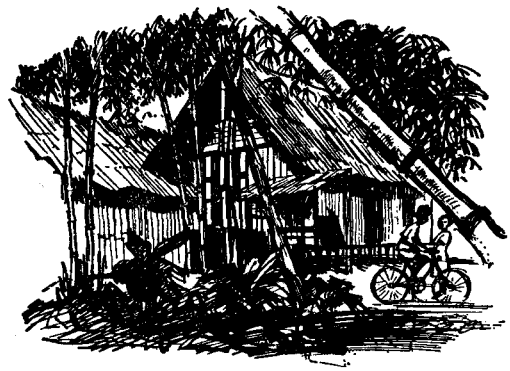
their rails the wan faces of sailors looked down upon us like prisoners, sometimes offering us a listless wave, or chewing gum like camels. The water was thick and scummy; the ships all looked rusty; it rained again, and when we got to the island an adamant official said we were forbidden to land there, owing to its being a quarantine station for *highly* infectious diseases—"*deadly* diseases, Madam, I cannot allow you to run the risks." I enjoyed every minute of the trip, and thought it admirably demonstrated for me the equatorial continuity of Singapore.

ACTUALLY HARDLY ANYBODY in Singapore seems to notice the continuity. The reason for this is that, though the Malays originally owned Singapore, the British developed it, and the Japanese conquered it, it was always the Chinese who really ran it. Year by year, generation after generation, they drifted down the line of the peninsula from their Chinese homeland, intuitively attracted by the opportunities of Singapore, until they far outnumbered Britons and Malays alike, and provided most of the island's muscles, and much of its brains. The Chinese are not habitually interested in the past, and the result is that Singapore essentially lives for the day, and does not much bother about history. The statues of Raffles and other imperial worthies survive unmolested, but lack-lustrely, as though nobody is quite sure who they are; and the Singapore Museum, so painstakingly built up by the imperialists, seems to have fallen into a genteel but unloved decline.



THE CHINESENESS of Singapore is a quality of the overseas Chinese, and thus stands to the central Chinese tradition, I suppose, rather as Australianness stands to England. It is very different from the flavour of Hong Kong, whose citizens live in everyday contiguity to China, and see the shores and hills of their heartland every day of their lives. Singapore is 1500 miles from China, and the vast majority of its inhabitants have never set eyes on the country. In Hong Kong one feels China beckoning her children home across the Sham Chun river; in Singapore one senses only the steelier, less emotional genius of China in exile.

China in Singapore is not beautiful. No great monuments give it grandeur. Its architecture is a muddle of styles East, West, and unclassifiable. Its faces are, to Western eyes, parchments of bland reticence. Its colours are greyish, greenish, wooden, sun-bleached colours. Its shapes are higgledy-piggledy. It seems beyond number and beyond control, yet it seems to move, too, with an inner deliberation, an innate expertise, that gives it an almost conspiratorial air, very different to the jolly push and roguery of Hong Kong.

Three-quarters of Singapore citizens are Chinese, and in effect this is a great Chinese city, one of the greatest. Nearly everything that is most vigorous about it is Chinese-sponsored, from the skyscraper to the corner *boutique*, from the exquisite cuisine of the great restaurants to the multitudinous eating stalls which, miraculously as the sun goes down, spring up in the streets and car parks of the city. The grave bewigged judges of the Supreme Court, impeccable though their Oxford English may be, and remote their acquaintance with Peking and Soochow, are really as Chinese as Mao himself. The sampan man in the harbour, though he lives and moves against a background of tropical sleaziness, is no more than a transplanted junk man from the grey Yangtse. Nine of the 12 Cabinet Ministers in the Singapore Government have Chinese names, and even now most Singapore citizens over 30, say, if you ask them their nationality, will say Hokkien, Cantonese, or Hakka.

THERE IS IN FACT a Chinatown, in the heart of the downtown city. Once it was a racial enclave created by British town-planners in the cause of communal harmony, now it is merely a quarter even more thickly Chinese than all the rest. They are going to pull it down soon, for it is old-fashioned, untidy, and picturesque, and already its nooks are being whittled away, and its crannies given logic. But I often strolled through it during my stay in Singapore, walking there across the green from Raffles Hotel, and spending a hour or so loitering around the waterfront of the

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Singapore River, which forms the promenade of Chinatown. Everyone was kind to me, for the Singapore Chinese seem to have, like Scots or Yankees, gentle natures beneath dour fronts; and in the Chinese way nothing is particularly private down there, and nobody minds you poking about.

So I pottered here and there among the go-downs, feeling always the pulse of profit, and I trod the precarious gangplanks to the lighters in the river, and I peered over the shoulders of the tally-men, intent at their ledgers in the shady warehouse doors. It was blazing hot whenever I was there, and all the earnest motion of the waterfront made it seem hotter still: so that often I took a few moments off from my investigations, and sat on a doorstep in the shade, fanning myself with my hat, while the local grandmothers mumbled benevolently beside me, and the bare-foot children gathered around as for a bedtime story. "Lady hot?" the passing labourers would say, and sometimes they would answer their own questions with a grin, humping their sacks upon their shoulders, or staggering beneath the load of a girder—"very hot, too too hot to-day. . . ."

BEHIND THE WATERFRONT the Chinese do their shopping. Here the food markets sprawl among the narrow streets, and deal in exotica like dried frogs and snake flesh, laid out beneath their tattered awnings in flamboyant exhibition. There are panoramas of fruit, oranges, papayas, rabutanas, limes, pears from Japan, apples from South Africa and the legendary durian, which smells so bad and tastes so scrumptious. There are eggs caked in mud, and bundles of dried fish, and indefinable herbs, and vegetables unknown to man, and cages of grasshoppers. The market women eyed me wrinkled and amused as I stood aghast before these marvels, and made witty remarks to each other in Hokkien, but the shoppers spared me hardly a glance, for they were choosing their victuals with a scholarly concentration, calculating the density of turnips, contemplating the specific gravity of carp, comparing the metabolisms of goose liver and pickled crab, before with decisive gestures they solved their several equations, and stuffing liver, noodles, pressed duck and sharks' fins into their blue-and-yellow plastic shopping bags, hastened home to make the soup.

Though fun for foreigners, little of this is actually remarkable. It is standard Chinadom, more or less, as it exists almost anywhere in the Chinese world. Singapore Chinatown does have a few distinctive quirks—the ornate eaved club-houses of the *hongs*, once gangsters' mobs, now charitable societies, or the sad street of the about-to-die, where the withered faces of the terminally sick look wistfully out from their rented chambers above the coffin-shops. Mostly, though, this is a fairly ordinary community of the overseas Chinese. It has the organic strength of the commonplace, and it feels absolutely inextinguishable, as though no natural calamity, no historical force, could ever wrest it from the island, or wrench the go-down capitalists from their abaci upon the quays.

THE CLASSIC VIEW of Singapore is from Mount Faber, a hillock which stands to the west of the harbour. Everyone goes up there sooner or later. The hill was named for a 19th-century colonial engineer, otherwise only remembered for his sensible demand that the Singapore River be deepened, when his bridge over it proved too low to let the lighters through. In British times the indefatigable wives of Colonial Secretaries and Directors of Public Works ascended it to paint their water-colours, and nowadays the practitioners of Tai Chi, the ritual exercises of the Chinese discipline, pursue their craft on the summit. Not long ago Mount Faber was almost rural, with only a bumpy way worn to the summit by the wheels of landaus. Now there is a tarred highway to the top, and a dramatic cable-way links it across the water to the newly-developed resort island of Sentosa, on the whole the least inviting tourist project I know.

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WHEN I FIRST WENT to Singapore it was the Raj that chiefly showed from Mount Faber, and filled my sketchbook pages, as it had filled Lady Timsbury's, with its domes and steeples. In those days the Padang and its buildings looked the embodiment of authority: its law courts and office blocks were like policemen linking arms to control the crush of the crowd behind, and keep it off the green. The crowd then was about 800,000 strong. Today it is more than 2 million, and has so overwhelmed that stately cordon that the policemen hardly show. Domę and portico, Raffles and Empress Place are dwarfed by the thickets and shafts of the new skyscrapers—gleaming, rectangular, terrifically ostentatious and none more than ten years old. New Singapore seems to be sprouting there before your eyes, and its proliferation of gaudy curtain-walls, its frenzy of penthouses and observation decks, defied my sketchbook pen, and made me turn the other way in desperation, and attempt a dispirited rendering of Sentosa.

They are a nasty kind of skyscraper—very rich, very arrogant, very vulgar, more like London's Centre Point than New York's Seagram Building. But they are more than mere show. They truly represent, as potently as the old Padang, a political energy: the new insular dynamic, born by defiance out of danger, which has made Singapore something new in the world for a second time, and created on this steamy island a startling kind of State.

WHEN THE CONSTITUENT PARTS of the British Empire were left to find their own place in the world, blessed one by one with a grant-in-aid and a farewell visit from royalty, Singapore was left more in the cold than most. It existed only as a cog in the imperial machine, one of the four Straits Settlements which were governed as a Crown Colony around the perimeter of the Malay protectorates (the others were Penang, Malacca, and Labuan). It was a predominantly Chinese island in a region profoundly suspicious of the Chinese, a non-Islamic community in a strongly Muslim part of the world. Attempts to incorporate Singapore in the Malaysian Federation soon failed, the Malaysians having no wish to be dominated by the Singapore Chinese. Relations with the Indonesians to the south were very nearly warlike. In 1965 Singapore declared itself a sovereign republic, "founded upon the principles of liberty and justice", with a flag of a crescent moon with five white stars, and the motto "*Let Singapore Flourish.*" A City-State was born, recognisably in the tradition of the merchant-princes, with a total area of 225 square miles, but an energy that made it, by 1974, the fourth busiest port on earth.

It is not, I think, an attractive republic, but it certainly has spirit. Though its relations with its neighbours are easier now, it remains a tense, tight little State, with the same prickly and defensive excitement as Israel, say, or Iceland—a backs-to-the-wall, let 'em all come, chips-down excitement. It is a noisily opinionated State, strong on hand-outs, short on tact or sympathy—a harsh and cocky State, setting its own standards, choosing its own styles, and working so hard that its living standards are claimed to be the highest in Asia, excepting only Japan's. There are very few slums in modern Singapore. There are no beggars at all. The railway trains may not arrive punctually, for they come over the Johore Causeway from Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, but I am quite sure they *leave* on time.

It is no coincidence that the new Singapore, like the old, is the creation of one man. There is no room here for committee government: until the War Singapore was an absolute dependency of Britain, and the Governor was in effect omnipotent. "Well", said His Excellency Sir Shenton Thomas, when told that the Japanese Imperial Army had invaded Malaya, "I suppose you'll shove the little men off!" I never saw Lee Kuan Yew when I was in Singapore, but like everyone else I felt I knew him well, from his frequent appearances on television, his well-known political opinions, and the sensation of his ubiquitous power. Physically, it is true, I sometimes confused him in my mind with Willy Brandt, to whom he bears a paradoxical Orientalised resemblance. But metaphysically I saw him clear, for he is a man built for greater consequence, the commands of armies or the marshalling of provinces, who is obliged by history to channel his brilliant and perhaps bitter abilities into the narrow arena of a State less populous than Wales.

> The first 150 years of Singapore [says a commemorative history published in association with the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce] open and close under the aegis of a great man: Raffles . . . pointing the way: Lee Kuan Yew for today.

Connoisseurs of sycophantic history, or for that matter of post-imperial commerce, will recognise

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the tone of this remark. It is the tone of a wary citizen, brought up in the liberal tradition of the West, who finds himself subject to a very different kind of authority, and is playing it cautiously. I have heard it in many corners of the old Empire, from Ghana to St Lucia; and if I observe that it seldom seems to have done anybody much good for long, I am not implying that Lee Kuan Yew is just another petty despot. He is by all accounts a cultivated and charming man, with a Cambridge law degree and a witty mind; but he is nevertheless if not actually a dictator, at least an authoritarian, at the head of a one-party State, and in his Singapore you will detect most of dictatorship's symptoms, good, bad, and disquieting.

LIKE MANY autocracies, Lee Kuan Yew's is very logical. Singapore has no natural resources, except its human ones, and it lives by its abilities. It makes things out of other peoples' substances; it loads and transships other peoples' cargoes; it fuels and mends other peoples' ships and aircraft; it refines other peoples' oil; it insures and disposes other peoples' goods; it gives advice; it banks money; it shows itself to visitors from elsewhere. Like many another former imperial entrepôt or dockyard—Malta, Gibraltar, Hong Kong—it sets out to perform for the world, as a free-lance, the offices it once performed, as a staff member, for the British Empire. This is a precarious status. Lee Kuan Yew believes that to preserve it, the whole State must be resolutely directed towards a kind of communal expertise. There is no time for argument. There is no room for dilettantism, nostalgia, or party politics. Prosperity is the single aim of the State, and it can only be retained by rigorous discipline and specialisation, under the unchallenged authority of an intelligent despotism. Political stability, reasons the Peoples' Action Party, equals foreign confidence, equals investment, equals prosperous security, which is all the average citizen wants of life and statesmanship.

In some ways this is a Puritan ethic; and both Cromwell and Mao would approve of many of Lee Kuan Yew's policies. Singapore is clean, relatively honest, apparently undecadent. Litter on the streets is savagely punished, drugs are resolutely kept out, the Rock culture is pointedly discouraged. Newspapers must toe the official line or disappear, and dissenting politicians too are apt to find themselves in trouble, or even prison. All this makes of course for the usual autocratic drabness. Nothing is more *boring* than a one-party State, and nothing is more depressing than to wake up at Raffles' Hotel, settling luxuriously down to papaya, toast and marmalade, and to find that there is nothing to read but the morning's *Straits Times*, a newspaper rather less outspoken than *Little Women*.

EVERYWHERE IN SINGAPORE NOWADAYS one feels the imprint of a single and implacable intelligence. At the University the arts faculties are being encouraged to die on their feet, as useless parasites of a technical society. At the cinema black blobs expunge unsuitable passages of film. At the airport young visitors are to be seen shepherded in embarrassment towards inner chambers to have their hair cut. Beside Anderson Bridge a hideous concrete chimera, half-lion, half-dolphin, adequately symbolises both the Republic's self-image and its aesthetic standards. Nothing, one feels in Singapore, is being left to chance: serendipity is the very last of this Republic's virtues. It is a living-machine, highly functional, with the ornamentation reduced to a minimum, and an inflexible foreman at the controls.

It is all very deliberate, very rational. Take industry. Since the entrepôt business is always vulnerable, and depends upon the economic circumstances of others, Singapore has deliberately turned itself into a manufacturing State—not just any old manufactures, but sophisticated products which less highly-skilled labour forces cannot manage. Young people are being educated towards this specific end, a new industrial city has been built on the most modern lines in the swamp country of the south-west, and already industry is more important to Singapore than the entrepôt trade of tradition.

Or take congestion. Since the land area is so small, the new Singapore is rebuilding itself on revolutionary lines. It is not simply that buildings are going higher. In Singapore entire social complexes are being concentrated within single

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blocks, containing not only hundreds of shops, offices, flats, but hotels, theatres, garages, swimming-pools, the whole entity pulled together by the inescapable escalators, perpetually packed and often visible from the street outside, which remain in my mind as the kinetic emblems of the Republic. The population is being re-housed in equally concentrated complexes, and so Singapore takes on an altogether new appearance, not quite like anywhere else, and more truly futuristic than anywhere else I know.

Or take tourism. This is very important to Singapore, and the Government adeptly adjusts some of its principles to accommodate it, especially as (except for shopping and Sentosa) there is practically nothing in Singapore for a tourist to do. When it comes to tourism Lee Kuan Yew's asceticism is modified, and all is indulgent luxury. There is the customary Duty-Free shopping, of course, without which no tourist haven can respectably survive. But there is also a carefully cherished ambience of the sybaritic. "INSTANT ASIA", the local publicists call Singapore, but it is an opulent kind of Asia. There are said to be more first-class hotels on Orange Road, once the epitome of colonial suburbia, than in the whole of Australia; and everywhere the travel agents burgeon, the foreign exchanges thrive, soft music sounds from hotel mezzanines, and wildly extravagant foods are served in preposterously garish decors.

It really is a new world—as new as the world that Raffles created, within this same cramped ground of experiment. Singapore's is a purely modern, technological society, without slack or sentiment: semi-communal, half brain-washed, materialist to the point of philistinism, but healthy, rich and enterprising. I expect it will crack one day, like most autocracies, when Lee Kuan Yew finally exceeds himself, succumbs to *folie de grandeur*, grows old or even dies, if death has not been banned in Singapore by then. In the meantime the Republic does not lose a moment. In every corner of Singapore, one feels, at every moment of day or night, the planners are planning, the excavators are churning, the steam-hammers chug and the ideologues prepare their next injunctions. "Hard Work, Thrift, and Grit" is what the Finance Minister demanded in his last budget speech, and Lee Kuan Yew would probably add discipline, loyalty, and clean finger-nails.

I OFTEN ASKED Singapore people if they were happy under this forceful régime, and once one of my hosts asked a similarly simplistic question of me. We were eating a delectable *poh piah* (eggs, squid, shrimp, chilis and mixed greens wrapped up in a thin pancake) at a stall in Hokkien Street, where the night looked down at us through the glare of Chinatown, and the sweating cooks laboured half-naked, towels around their necks, over their blazing stoves. "You do a lot of travelling", said my friend, "so tell me, do you think all this is a good idea?"

A good idea? I looked at him blankly, searching in vain for some Confucianist retort, like "the wise boatman does not measure the current", or perhaps "What use is the scroll without the brush?" I did not know what to say. The impact of the new Singapore is so powerful, so diametrically opposite to the bourgeois pragmatism of the old, that my sensibilities were rather numb. Was it a good idea? I certainly found it stimulating. The neo-Fascist vigour of Singapore is undeniably that, if only because one feels that despite its chaste veneer it is fundamentally amoral. The futuristic imagination of the place is undeniably exciting. I myself rather relish that sense of zealous and unswerving purpose, not fortunately having to share the purpose myself. I find Lee Kuan Yew attractive as a person, but then I am often attracted by cultured authoritarianism. Singapore is excellent as theatre, if tedious, perhaps, as real life.

As to the idea of it, I felt disqualified to judge. Though I am by no means an addict of universal democracy, and recognise that our own dear Empire was at least as despotic as Lee Kuan Yew, still I am too much a child of my time and my background to enjoy the taste of autocracy. I believe in man's full and free self-expression. But even as I thought over my reply, I began to feel like an old-school music-lover trying to come to terms with electronic music. Could I be behind the times, in so distrusting the idea? Was this ruthless specialisation, this cutting away of dead wood, this culling of energies, necessary for human survival? Could Lee Kuan Yew be right, in claiming that in Singapore at least, the rich man was happier than the free? How long would you pine for liberty, if you had never sampled it?

TWICE IN A SINGLE JOURNEY I had been tempted towards these heresies—once looking across the Chinese frontier from Hong Kong, and now toying with my *poh piah* in Hokkien Street. It

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was not because I was weak in my allegiances; it was because I felt I was experiencing, if only vicariously, something new in the world—a new energy of the East with which, sooner or later, the Western peoples will come to grips, if not physically, at least philosophically. It is a sort of mystic materialism, a compelling marriage between principle and technique which neither capitalism nor Soviet communism seem to me to have achieved.

The great tourist experience of Singapore used to be a visit to Change Alley, the dark covered bazaar, hardly wide enough to stretch one's arms in, through whose gauntlet of Indian shopkeepers and money-changers generations of travellers picked their bemused and gullible way. I did it once or twice for old times' sake, stepping into the alley's shadows out of the glare and hustle of the quays, and enduring once more the immemorial banter of the bazaars, that *leit-motif* of Empire—"You wanta change money? You want souvenirs? Look, lady, very good silk, real silk. Where you from? You got dollars? You got pounds? Look here, very cheap—come and look, no need to buy, have a cup of coffee with my father!"

Nowadays, though, the excitement of Change Alley comes at the far end of it, where it debouches into Raffles Place. Half way through I was tempted sometimes to think that nothing changes in the Orient after all, or ever will. But the moment I emerged from that clamorous trap, and saw as in fantasy the new towers of Singapore shining in the sunshine, then I knew I was seeing something different out of the East: the City-State, within its island ramparts, brazen and self-assured. It was like emerging from a tunnel under the walls, to surface within some extra-territorial civilisation, where everything was shinier and brassier and more automatic than life, and new kinds of people were genetically reared.

I knew my reactions then. Let me out! I cried in my waking dream. Let me out! Where's Reggie?

In Montana

My tenth day in America, I found
the place became less funny. Nothing changed:
our Greyhound lapped the miles reflectively,
and still we ran beside the railroad track
which bore us company, from long time back,
into a future looking just as blank.

Any old novelty soon came to count
for something special. The spare earth swelled to sleekness,
as freshly fledged, beneath a combing wind,
as the first green in Eden. Once or twice
we passed a shack still flaking off its hinges,
or, in the roadside lurch, a baking car
whose driver had baled out God only knows
how long ago, and left his '50 Olds
marooned in time. I'd never seen the grass
look just that new, or relicts quite so ageless.

My eyes were being widened. When I saw
a big fresh sign *Historical Monument:*
1900 point to vacant distance
I hardly raised a smile: I looked out, sharper,
to be in time for what was there to see.

William Dunlop

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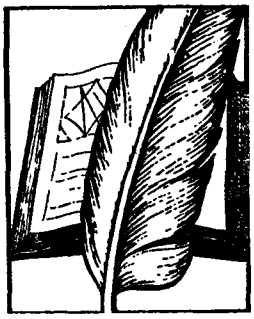

Column

MANY SPECTRES ARE haunting Europe today, among them inflation, deflation, the threat of a world economic depression, and the possibility of mass unemployment on a scale unknown since the 1930s. Indeed the spectres are so numerous that it seems sometimes as if every graveyard had given up its ghosts simultaneously, and they throng around us so densely that it is hard to discern the bodies of the living. We live in a cemetery of disappointed hopes and cheated expectations, and as yet no one quite sees how we are going to make ourselves comfortable in it.

The change in our attitude to the future has been so sudden that as yet we have hardly had time to get used to it and certainly no one seems able to derive much comfort from it or even to make much sense of it. It is not only people's hopes that have been dashed; it is their confidence in all those to whom they have entrusted the conduct of their affairs and, even more perhaps, in that great army of experts who, in think-tanks all over the world, assiduously poured out blueprints of the future which, however much they might vary from each other, at least agreed in this: that there was no limit to the continuous increase in the production of material goods to which we could all confidently look forward. Of course, not all would share equally in such material progress, but all would benefit by it to some extent and in a planet which was growing continuously richer and richer even the poor would secure some crumbs from the rich men's tables. If there was anything we had to face, it was suggested, it was not any sudden reversal of the process of continuous enrichment. It was rather that the process would continue with such increasing momentum that in the end mankind, gorged and distended by conspicuous consumption, would perish of a surfeit of material riches.

Where are they now, those prophets of continually multiplying gross national products, those hordes of scientists, economists, technologists, situation analysts who, like flocks of migratory birds, filled the air as they proceeded, on what Arthur Koestler has called "the Call-Girl Circuit", from conference to conference in which they analysed and described the wonders which post-Industrial society had in store for us? They are back in their think-tanks, hurriedly preparing a revised set of blue-prints in which abundance has given place to universal need. The planes which carried them to their global conferences are grounded and hardly have the fuel to become airborne. And even the think-tanks themselves, once so warmly supplied with every gadget and gimmick which the ingenuity of man can devise, are becoming a little chilly and forbidding, as even the great research foundations, whose funds once seemed inexhaustible, begin to feel the pinch of necessity as the stock exchanges fall, their assets dwindle, and the crock of gold becomes a mirage at the rainbow's end.

THIS MAY SEEM to many an exaggerated picture, and how could it not be so, when their entire way of life assumes that it cannot be true? To those however who, like myself, believe that it will soon cease to look like an exaggeration, every day seems to bring confirmation that the future may be even bleaker. Who would have believed, only a short time ago, that panic buying of ordinary domestic necessities like sugar and salt should have become an everyday occurrence; that I should have been unable to buy at my stationer's an ordinary foolscap envelope, because, they said, they were unable to obtain supplies from the wholesaler; that, at my chemist's, I should be warned to order any medicines at least a month in advance, if I wished to be sure of having them. I am sure that others could easily reproduce such incidents out of their own experience.

Ordinary people, like myself, find such things confusing and bewildering. They cannot be sure whether they are minor interruptions in the normal functioning of society, or whether they are symptoms of something far more fundamental; and the doubt reveals itself in a kind of anxiety, of *Angst*, which tends to make them behave unreasonably and irrationally, as people sometimes do on a sinking ship. It does not help matters that, if they seek for some intelligible explanation of what is happening to them, they are met by such a cacophony of stridently conflicting opinions that they adopt the time-honoured precept of every man for himself.

Of course, it is wrong to allow oneself to be too much influenced by one's own personal experiences, or to draw general conclusions from what may be purely subjective impressions. But short of some general intellectual consensus which would command the assent of most rational men, what else does one do? One would be a fool to do anything else, especially if, from a wider world, there come messages which seem to confirm that subjective impressions do have some objective relevance. For instance, I note in *The Times* today, immediately after the Budget, three reports that strengthen the general impression which I gain from the behaviour of those about me. One is devoted to the Budget itself, from

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which I draw the conclusion that it is quite impossible to reconcile the assumptions on which Mr Denis Healey's two previous budgets were based with those which determine what he is now pleased to call his "strategy." I am in no position to criticise the financial details of Mr Healey's latest budget; but the details are of little importance compared with the degree of intellectual confusion they are likely to inspire in the public mind.

Secondly, I note a short news item which states that the United States has now "officially" recognised that it has entered a period of recession. A week earlier, President Ford had, equally "officially", denied that this was the case; but this seems to have been one of those White House statements which prove to be "inoperative." Anyone who recognises the dependence of the Western world on the continued prosperity of the United States economy can only regard such an announcement with profound gloom, which is intensified by the certainty that President Ford and his advisers have not the slightest idea what to do about it. There has not, however, as yet, been any official pronouncement to this effect. No doubt this will come later.

Third in my list of *faits divers* for the day was an account of the official opening by Mr Harold Macmillan, Chancellor of Oxford University, of Wolfson College, the latest addition to Oxford's residential colleges. The College has been founded on grants of £1.5m. from the Wolfson Foundation and £1.6m. from the Ford Foundation, and it was anticipated that this would be sufficient to finance its new buildings, their upkeep and maintenance and the prosecution of research. Today however it is no more than is needed to pay for upkeep, food, and taxes; nothing is left over for research. Sir Isaiah Berlin, at the opening ceremony, said that our continued existence depended on our living by our wits, but this is apparently something we can no longer afford. We can afford to pay the rates and to feed and house our scientists and humanists; but we can't afford to let them think.

★

AMID SUCH SIGNS of gathering gloom, it may seem almost frivolous to record the decline of a particular group of scholars, if that is the right word, who in the past have afforded me considerable entertainment and, occasionally, edification and enlightenment. I refer to the "Kremlinologists," those students of Russian affairs who undertook to provide us with a guide through the darkest labyrinths of Soviet politics and, as a result, possibly enable us one day to slay the Minotaur which was to be found in their deepest recesses. They were, says the *New York Times*, "oracles, soothsayers, prophets, scholars. They knew the best of times and now they have fallen on the worst of times. Their utility questioned, their expertise suspect, Kremlinologists have become an endangered species. . . ."

Many reasons are suggested for the passing away of these rare and once pampered animals; perhaps they are best summarised in a succinct statement by Professor George F. Kennan, of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Princeton, who attributes the fallen status of the Kremlinologists to "the passing of the Cold War, the shortage of funds for educational institutions, the fact that China has edged out Russia in public interest, and the unchangeability and dull uniformity of the Soviet leadership for the last seven or eight years."

To the genuine devotee of Kremlinology, what a dreadful picture Mr Kennan's statement presents, but perhaps its most distressing feature is the implication that by today the Soviet Union has become invincibly dowdy and old hat. Until recently a tiny incident in the Kremlin could be guaranteed to command the attention of the world, and the Kremlinologist could be sure that ample funds would be available to enable him to register even the smallest seismological tremor in the Russian political hierarchy. Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, of Columbia University, could be sure of world-wide attention when he commented on the photographs of the Soviet leaders gathered in Red Square for the May Day parade:

> Some people have moved up, some have moved down. The symbolism of the military prominence is a sign of the importance of the military-industrial complex. In the '74 pictures the only ones who have their hats on are the military and the secret police. What are they hiding? . . .

Why did no one laugh? Perhaps the Kremlinologists died like dinosaurs, of their vast bulk of trivial information organised by tiny little brain-cells. Professor Brzezinski himself has said that the surfeit of information has made interpretation much harder. It was much easier, after all, when one really knew nothing.

But today, alas, no one is interested in who is wearing a hat at the May Day parade. In the fashion show of politics the Soviet Union is no longer smart, no longer chic. Its place in revolutionary *haute couture* has been taken by China, and beside it the Soviet Union looks like the Co-op compared with Marks and Spencer. Besides, the Kremlinologists no longer have a monopoly even of their own chosen field. Interlopers and independent entrepreneurs have broken in, most of all from the Soviet Union itself, with personal knowledge and experience for which even the most minute study of the Soviet press is no substitute. "Formerly you only had official sources" says Karel van het Reve (of the Herzen Foundation in Amsterdam). "Now you have a lot of people writing independently,

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and it's surely more interesting to listen to Sakharov and Amalrik and Solzhenitsyn than to read *Pravda*."

Worst of all, perhaps, for the Kremlinologist, nothing seems to happen any longer in the Kremlin and even the most fertile imagination, operating on the barest minimum of knowledge, cannot make much of the minuscule shifts of power and influence that are all that is apparent to the outside world. Nevertheless, the Kremlinologist does his best; who better than Victor Zorza, Kremlinologist to the *Washington Post*?

> Brezhnev will certainly resist any attempts to dismiss him. . . . But it would be a mistake to regard the new Brezhnev "cult" as a sign of his strength. . . . No one outside the Kremlin can really know, but there have always been many clues [and the] direction of political trends can be reversed, but the signs suggest that we are now approaching a moment of decision.

That seems to take account of everything, and whatever happened or did not happen it would be difficult to show that Zorza had been wrong.

SHOULD ONE DEPLORE the death, or decline, of the Kremlinologist? For myself, I certainly should, because during a period in which it was very hard to discover any kind of reliable factual information about the Soviet Union, they succeeded in amassing a body of knowledge which was subject to the principle of verification. But the structure they built was valuable only when it was based on an historical and sociological knowledge of a kind which very few people possess. Leo Labedz, in the same article from the *New York Times* on which I have drawn for quotations, puts the situation very well.

> Kremlinology is a useful help in good hands, with analytical depth that is historical, sociological, political, but not just as a methodological key to open the door of the Kremlin or to look through the keyhole. . . .

THE LATE TIBOR SZAMUELY was, in my view, one who used Kremlinology in precisely this spirit. He was a person with whom I often argued and disagreed when we discussed our own domestic politics, because I thought that he applied to Britain mental categories of thought which did not really work in our parochial and insular context. But when he talked about Russia, and the political structure of the Soviet Union, I bowed my head in deference because of his unique and unrivalled experience and knowledge of how the system really works. I have often thought that no one ever understands a country or a language unless they know it from the point of view of childhood and youth, the words and cries which babies babble in their cradle, the slang which schoolboys use in the playground, the ways in which their fathers and mothers (and maids and nurses) talked, and which to them were absurd and outdated; without all this language becomes thin and abstract, and history a dead subject.

Szamuely was a unique character because he had precisely this kind of knowledge both of England and of the Soviet Union. In childhood and youth he had known both the joys and tortures of English schools and the greater miseries of Soviet concentration camps; from both experiences he emerged, as by a miracle, almost unscathed. Though he became, in England, an excellent university teacher, a very good journalist, and a skilled and effective controversialist, one had the feeling, when he died prematurely last year at the age of 46, that a wealth of knowledge and experience had been lost which no one else one knew was in a position to provide.

I am all the more delighted, therefore, that his posthumously published book, *The Russian Tradition*,[1] should now have done everything, and rather more than, one had hoped and expected of him. Kremlinologists, I suspect, will not like it, precisely because it conveys a sense of the continuity of Russian history and Russian literature which they themselves mostly lack. Serious historians of Russia will, I am sure, find much to criticise and quarrel with in his general thesis that there is a specifically and uniquely Russian tradition which achieved its culmination in the existing structure of society and government in the Soviet Union. The Revolution, he implies, did not destroy that tradition; it was its apotheosis.

Nevertheless, despite such criticism, I have found *The Russian Tradition* by far the most interesting, fascinating and exciting book about Russia since, over 40 years ago, I read Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. It is a measure of my admiration for Szamuely's book that I should make such a comparison. I don't know that Szamuely would have liked it very much; yet I know of no other historical works about Russia available in English at the present time which give one so compelling a sense of the greatness and tragedy of the Russian people's role in history.

It would be an impertinence for me to point out the merits and virtues of this very brilliant book; that is a task which should be left to those who are better qualified. All I can say is that I read it with intense pleasure and admiration, and a sense that, though Szamuely died young, it was not too soon for him to leave behind him a memorial which will ensure that he is not forgotten. *R*

[1] *The Russian Tradition*. By TIBOR SZAMUELY. Edited and with an Introduction by ROBERT CONQUEST. Secker & Warburg, £5.

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Peter Porter

Down Cemetery Road

The wind brings the Sunday bells. Come to church,
good people. But for me they're simulacra
of the great bell in my chest, clouting out the end.

This comes of keeping one's nose to the moral north
where gods go when they die. Oh how pleased
they are to leave their Babylonian captivity.

And how strange that religion comes from the East
where tourists see only commerce—fanaticism
seeking blue-eyed converts in the claggy fens.

But not the point of this poem. The chorale of Bach's
which moves me most is a tune of 1713,
a real contemporary, *Liebster Gott, wann wird ich sterben?*

The tune is Daniel Vetter's, the treatment Bach's.
There's the soft flush of earth when corpse and men
move among the matutinal flowers.

Bells like teeth touching, the towers of Leipzig
carving a Lutheran world in friendly slices,
that warm sententiousness we know as death.

Almost chirpy music, but don't ask the corpse
his view. Perhaps he sees that transcendental
radish bed promised by the tame Tibetans.

After a lifetime of blood-letting, we deserve
a vegetable future. The flutes and oboes pilfer grief,
we have earned this joyful gruesomeness.

I think I was six when first I thought of death.
I've been religious ever since. Good taste
lay in wait and showed me avenues of music.

Which opened on the road to Leipzig's cemetery,
the alder trees in leaf and the choristers
waiting for their dinner. *Herrscher über Tod und Leben!*

We Northerners are really Greek. Stoic, old
and held by oracles. Tears are running down like soot.
My daily prayer, *Mach einmal mein Ende gut!*

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Peter Scupham

Rule

Freshets of rain: in such a glister
Decay speaks with her Roman tone;
God's City lies in scattered chapters,
The warm bread broken into stone.
  Eve passes with her basket; was
  Learned deeply here in bells and grass.

On features limned by Towne or Crome,
The ivy wanders à la mode:
An Early English style, appointed
To recollect us to our God.
  Light, where the foliaged waters run,
  And cattle lodged on gleams of sun.

The County History trails its blazons,
Bound in the tenantry's cowed skin;
Armorial in dissolution,
The Western sky looks full, yet thin.
  Sir Priest, in Tennysonian bands,
  Lies chancelled into folded hands.

Amen. The loose leaf of a Psalter
Glosses in gold our primal sin,
The ways we went through fire and water.
Those reds and blues embroidered in
  The hammered uncials fly their threads,
  A tangled harness for beast heads.

The power is stated, spent, retained:
Old Lear, Victorian with bright eyes,
Is bearded in his den with flowers.
John Gilbert's rough calligraphies
  Work out new crowns of thorn, entwine
  Cordelia as Columbine.

The Rector's horse is beautiful;
The Curate's jade is picturesque.
A disenfranchised demon wears
His runnelled face in sour grotesque,
  A conduit for the tumbling skies.
  We feel the water-table rise,

Staining the vellum signatures,
Parting the mason's greening seam;
The arks of our lost covenant
Beach out on Ararats of dream
  In rain which congregates the night
  Across such breadth and from such height.

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Elie Halévy & England Now

The Topicality of History—By ANTHONY HARTLEY

ELIE HALÉVY'S *Histoire du peuple anglais au XIXe siècle* has long been acknowledged, on both sides of the Channel, as a masterpiece of precise scholarship and historical intuition. Since the first volume—*L'Angleterre en 1815*—appeared in 1912, enough professional historians have borne witness to the success with which Halévy carried out his monumental plan for any repetition of their tributes to be necessary here. To re-read the book even now, when so much more research has been done on the English 19th century, is to be struck once again by the extraordinary mass of reading—archives, parliamentary reports, royal commissions, memoirs, private correspondence—which lies behind the narrative and gives it its authority. But the flow of fact is never deadening in its effect on the reader, and, from the crowded detail, there emerges an historical pattern taking on its full force in great passages of analysis such as Halévy's account of church affairs in the 1830s or in description remarkable for its economy like the concluding account of Britain's entry into the First World War: "*La nuit vint, et l'Angleterre entra dans la guerre.* (Night fell. England entered the war)."

Halévy's view of history was a wide one. As social history his work was much in advance of its time, though it certainly owed something to W. E. H. Lecky, whose *History of England in the 18th Century* appeared between 1878 and 1890, and to constitutional authorities such as Dicey and Bagehot. In any case, the English people—and not merely the principalities and powers of English life—lie at the heart of the book, and even when Halévy deals with foreign policy or parliamentary politics, he never fails to suggest the tumultuous background of a nation in the throes of revolutionary social change. The full complexity of English life is there with its passionate moral feelings, its bizarre relationships between the classes, and its energetic impulsion towards social improvement. An English reader must be as impressed by the accuracy of Halévy's understanding as he will be affected by the magnitude of the compliment paid to his society and civilisation by a scholar who devoted his life to making them more comprehensible.

> "Because I am French [wrote Halévy in the preface to his first volume] my knowledge of English life is, indeed, more external than would have been the case were I a native Englishman, but on the other hand, for that very reason it is perhaps more objective."[2]

It is this very objectivity which makes his sympathy for England and English institutions more flattering. The most valuable of friends are those who like us for what we are. And he himself saw in the *entente cordiale* between France and Great Britain not merely a political alliance against a common enemy, but (as he put it in his Rhodes memorial lecture at Oxford) "something more lasting, because more spiritual . . . founded . . . upon the more positive qualities of charity, hope and faith."[2] Implicit in these words was the conviction, common to many 19th-century liberals, that out of the cultural dialogue between England and France had arisen the ideals and achievements of European liberalism. He felt—as who cannot who has read the history of Europe?—that the two countries were peculiarly close together and that from their interaction had come many of the most positive elements in European civilisation: freedom and a tradition of intellectual curiosity, undeterred by discouraging noises from "the authorities."

EVERYONE WHO HAS READ Halévy's history has lamented the fact that it remained unfinished. He turned aside to write an "Epilogue" on the period between 1895 and 1914; but some of his finest work is contained in these two volumes, and the decision can hardly be regretted. However, it should not be forgotten that he was also the author

[1] *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, Vol VI. The Rule of Democracy 1905-1914* (Ernest Benn, London, 1961), p.676.
[2] *The Era of Tyrannies* (1967), p.162.

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of a major work of intellectual history, *La Formation du Radicalisme philosophique* (1901–1940)[3] —just how major can be seen if it is compared with Sir Leslie Stephen's work on the same theme, *The English Utilitarians*, which appeared a year before Halévy's first volume. Both the earlier choice of subject and the philosophical training it implies are important if the full significance of the history is to be understood.

GREAT HISTORIANS have usually taken a philosophical view of their subject. The difference between them has consisted in whether or not that view was made explicit. As well as recounting the narrative, or analysing the pattern, of events the historian will have something to say on his own account about the nature of man and his existence in the world. In Halévy's case this message was concealed, partly by an extreme discretion in putting forward his own opinions, partly by the overwhelming amount of detail which he put into his historical writing. Yet, no less than the works of a Gibbon or a Macaulay, his history had its moral.

Writing to him after the publication of the first volume, Alain compared his work to that of Marx. In so far as it refers to the attention paid to social phenomena, the comparison is just. But not surprisingly Alain missed the real character of Halévy's work. The conclusion drawn from this mass of social fact is very different from that of Marx, and (it might be added) more convincing as an historical interpretation. What Halévy is describing is not the potential breakdown of the first society to develop Industrial Capitalism, but the adaptation by means of which it was to avoid a mortal crisis.

The question posed by the study of 19th-century England is clearly stated at the end of the first section of the history. Halévy paints a picture of a system of government, possessing no effective bureaucracy and lacking even the means to repress disorder, which found itself faced with the social upheaval created by the Industrial Revolution, with bitter divisions of class and of religion. In 1815 it would have appeared to any observer that England was a land of actual disorder and potential revolution.

> "Nevertheless, in the course of the coming century the British Government was destined to give proof of greater stability than any other Government in Europe. How are we to explain the apparent paradox?"

It might have been expected that a political system, unable to cope with the multiplying factors of anarchy, would sink into chaos or be overthrown by some convulsion. An oligarchic structure, inherited from the 18th century and weakened by the long ordeal of the Napoleonic wars, might well have disintegrated completely under the complex pressures to which it was exposed. What happened was quite different.

> "What actually took place in England was this. The elements of disorder and anarchy inherent in the political tradition of the country lost their character and submitted insensibly to a discipline freely accepted. Though sects multiplied, sectarian animosities died down. Riot was softened into peaceable demonstration, and civil war became a party strife waged in accordance with rules freely admitted on either side."

Why was this so, and what was the regenerating principle poured into the veins of the English *body politic*?

Halévy's answer is given in his conclusion to the same volume. The English governing classes might regard sects like the Methodists with suspicion, but the renewed religious fervour which Wesley and his followers created and imparted to the Anglican church in the form of Evangelicalism was to be the true cement of society:

> "Had they understood the situation better, they would have realised that Methodism was the antidote to Jacobinism, and that the free organisation of the sects was the foundation of social order in England. 'England is a free country': this means at bottom that England is a country of voluntary obedience, of an organisation freely initiated and freely accepted."

"Voluntary obedience, spontaneous organisation. . . ." In other passages Halévy describes the process by which this religious revival influenced the manners and mediated the conflicts of English society:

> "[The Evangelical] influence invested the British aristocracy with an almost Stoic dignity, restrained the plutocrats who had newly risen from the masses from debauchery and vulgar ostentation and placed over the proletariat a select body of workmen enamoured of virtue and capable of self-restraint. Evangelicalism was thus the conservative force which restored in England the balance momentarily destroyed by the explosion of the revolutionary forces."

AT THIS POINT Halévy's historical studies intersected with, and confirmed, the lesson he had drawn from his researches into Bentham and his followers. For these philosophical advocates of rational improvement profoundly affected the life of their time, thereby proving the possibility of modifying society by means of individual intellectual endeavour. "The very appearance and success of individualistic doctrines," we read in the conclusion to the *Formation du Radicalisme philosophique*, "would alone be enough to prove

[3] Published as *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (1954). There is a new paperback edition from Faber (1972).

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that, in Western society, individualism is the true philosophy. Individualism is the common characteristic of Roman law and Christian morality. . . ." This was probably a statement of Halévy's deepest political beliefs, but it was also a reasonable conclusion to draw from the evidence of English 19th-century history. For if the individual religious fervour of the Wesleyans and the Evangelicals could provide the moral imperative for reform, creating the conditions in which orderly cooperation between the different classes of society became possible, the Utilitarians (like the Fabians after them) were to provide the concrete legislative suggestions through which these aspirations could be realised. And as in his earlier work Halévy had traced the development of the doctrines of the individualistic—not to say eccentric—body of men who followed Bentham, so in his history he analysed the enormous influence they exercised upon the gradual transformation of Great Britain into an administratively centralised state. From the intellectual ferment created by Bentham and his disciples sprang the optimism of the freetraders, whose profound distrust of state intervention in economic matters can already be seen in James Mill. By a paradox, however, which Halévy himself came to regard as a somewhat sour joke, the Utilitarians were also responsible for the administrative improvement of the state that opened the way for a limited state socialism of the kind we know today.

Thus Halévy's first major book was a record of the change that can be brought about in society by the power of the intellect. It is not surprising that his history should have explained the benign evolution of English 19th-century society by what might be called cultural factors: religious belief and philosophical rationalism operating together to create an ethos in which individual effort and a sense of duty towards society were strongly united.

> "British individualism is a moderate individualism, a mixture whose constituents are often mingled beyond the possibility of analysis, a compound of Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism."

What the Evangelicals and the Utilitarians shared in common was a temperament composed in equal parts of serious purpose and active zeal. The fact that they started from opposing philosophical points of view did not affect the convergence of their impact upon English society.

Emphasising, as he did, the moral imperative which, in his view, provided the central driving-force of English history during the 19th century, Halévy was prone to neglect some of its disadvantages. He paid little attention to the effect of this strongly puritanical force on the quality of social life; and the criticisms of the Clapham sect made by, say, Thackeray would probably have seemed frivolous to him. In fact, he writes slightingly of the "pitiful and fruitless" efforts made by John Stuart Mill "to escape from the narrow-mindedness of the Philosophical Radicals", leaving his readers under the impression that James Mill was a more considerable figure than his son. Yet John Stuart Mill's criticism of the psychological effects of Utilitarianism (in his *Autobiography*) pointed accurately enough to what was wanting in the self-confident well-doing of Victorian England. The Protestant revival could produce Pecksniffs and the Utilitarian movement Gradgrinds. And when Matthew Arnold wrote of the need for "sweetness and light" in the England of his day, he was describing a serious cultural defect whose consequences would be felt in the vulgarity and oppressiveness of much of social life in the late Victorian years. Certainly the spiritual and intellectual forces described by Halévy provided the impetus behind the English achievement during the 19th century. But the development of political and economic power implies—inevitably perhaps—a degree of impoverishment in other respects, if only because ways of thought and action which are consecrated by success tend to exclude alternatives and to bear down criticism. The optimistic Victorian spirit of improvement and expansion resembles that which, until quite recently, reigned undisputed in the United States; and during its heyday, it neglected quite as many of the more intractable features of human nature.

HALÉVY MIGHT HAVE considered these questions had he been able to carry his history beyond 1852 into the era of the critics of Victorian life—of an Arnold or a Ruskin. As it was, he turned aside during the 1920s to write his "Epilogue", the massive two volumes dealing with the years between 1895 and 1914 in which he was able to use the material accumulated for lectures at the *Ecole libre des sciences politiques*. A final volume covering the age of Peel appeared posthumously after the Second World War. The publication of the work between 1912 and 1948 therefore coincided both with the final brilliance of British world power and with the diminution of the country's place in the world which, when it came, was to proceed with devastating rapidity.

In fact, during the writing of his history Halévy gradually came to adopt a less optimistic attitude towards the subject which he was studying. In his preface to volumes II and III (1923) he remarks upon the breakdown of the Two-Party System brought about by Lloyd George and describes the effect produced by the War on his own judgments of events. Now he had come to prefer a Peel to a Canning, whose brilliant manoeuvres in foreign policy were accompanied by a danger of international conflict, While writing his

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"epilogue" he noted the decline of the Protestant belief and the economic individualism which had marked the 19th century in England. Replacing them he saw Socialism and a protectionist imperialism which only imperfectly concealed an uneasy consciousness that Great Britain could no longer compete on equal terms with Germany or the United States. In the second of these two volumes he proclaimed his desire to return to his main task in words that are significant of a certain disillusionment:

> "The task to which I am impatient to return and to which I propose to devote the remainder of my strength and my life will be the story of that great epoch during which the British people cherished the splendid illusion that they had discovered in a moderate liberty, and not for themselves alone but for every nation that would have the wisdom to follow their example, the secret of moral and of political stability."

And Julien Benda comments:

> "The whole ideal of Elie Halévy and a part of his generation is there, as well as the nobility of his disillusionment with the growing barbarity of the Europe of today."[4]

It was indeeed the disappearance of that "illusion" which marked a decisive stage in the decline of liberal Europe. Yet Halévy continued to hope that the traditional political adaptability of the English would succeed in coping with the problems of the 20th century as it had coped with those of the 19th. In an article on the "Whitley Councils" (bodies set up to arbitrate in cases of industrial dispute)—it was published in 1919—he wrote:

> "Now the time for class war has come, for England as for the whole Western world. What an honour it would be for English wisdom if the same methods from which she has profited on so many occasions could again be brought to bear. . . . If it comes true, we shall see the class struggle, acclimatized on English soil, adapting itself to the traditional party system After so many political triumphs in the last two centuries, it is possible that England will bring about this new triumph."[5]

Fifteen years later Halévy was pointing out that political figures from diverse parties such as Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Sir Oswald Mosley could find common ground in the demand for a more authoritarian type of government to deal with the growing economic chaos. This he attributed to the rise of Socialism—its rise as "a paralytic and inert party awakening expectations which it is unable to satisfy."

Yet he could still maintain his original faith in what, for want of a better term, must be called the English genius. In an essay published just before his death on *Le Libéralisme en Angleterre* he delivered his final judgment, reiterating the confidence which had been a major theme of his intellectual life:

> ". . . how could I not conclude that the English people is a truly Hegelian people, possessing the art, in its social and political life, of identifying contradictions? Before our eyes it is going towards authoritarianism without ceasing to be faithful to parliamentary government: it is becoming protectionist in fact, while remaining free-trading in spirit."[6]

Despite his quotation from Hegel, Halévy still remained a liberal who regarded Bolshevism and Fascism as proceeding essentially from the same phenomenon: the chaos brought about by war or social and economic collapse. As an historian he was an anti-Marxist. For him the history of 19th-

[4] Julien Benda, *Elie Halévy 1870–1937* (Paris, 1938), p.65.
[5] *The Era of Tyrannies* (1967), p.122.
[6] *Inventaires: La crise sociale et les idéologies nationales* (Paris, 1936), p. 23.

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century England was dominated by spiritual and intellectual forces which were gradually able to produce a habit of political cooperation. In this way there developed the rules of a game of politics which have persisted into an age where tensions have grown more acute, and Great Britain appears to have lost its power to influence events. Evangelical religion and Utilitarian reform combined to create what a follower of Bentham would have called "an artificial identity of interests"; and the resulting cohesiveness of political life has endured until the present day. The durability of a political culture, informed by religious and philosophical beliefs and surviving economic change and social upheaval, provides the connecting thread which runs through Halévy's great book. And the impression sustained from a reading of this massively documented history is all the greater in that the lasting creation which it records is eminently one of the human spirit displaying its mastery over blind social and economic forces.

FOR AN ENGLISHMAN in 1975, Halévy's views on the history of his country pose a question which appears more imperative the more it is considered. Was his confidence in us justified? If political adaptability and social homogeneity were the keys to British success during the 19th century, did these qualities survive into the 20th? Do we still possess them today? Or is the political culture which Halévy described dying, and the English capacity to respond to change by reform, developed originally under the impulsion of strong moral feelings, gradually atrophying as those feelings themselves lose their power?

At the same time as Halévy was finishing his "epilogue" another French scholar, André Siegfried, published a book, *La Crise britannique au XXe siècle* (1931), in which a very different note was struck from the basic optimism which Halévy felt about English life. "Do not go to post-war England if you are in need of a tonic," wrote Siegfried. "It is not sufficiently invigorating." The gravamen of his charge against the English was a lethargy and complacency which equally inhibited any effort to better their lot through harder work and any comprehension that they had some things to learn from other countries. Intellectual laziness and a sense of their own superiority kept Englishmen from facing their problems, while a visible diminution of the stock of national energy would probably have prevented solutions of those problems even had they been identified.[7] The book was very much an exercise in pointing out the feet of clay of what was still apparently a British colossus, and, as such, it was received by its contemporary English readers with a mixture of irritation and masochism. But Siegfried's acuteness (and his prescience can hardly be questioned by anyone who reads it today) suggests that there were two sides to the English political virtues depicted by Halévy. For, without the moral imperatives that originally created it, has not the English political culture of compromise and adaptability come to mean simply a mediation of conflict at all costs, an avoidance of the harsh measures which would have been necessary to meet changing world conditions and the serious decline of British power? Without the body of doctrine provided by the Utilitarians and the practical proposals which were drawn from it, does not pragmatism mean an unconsidered grasping at temporary expedients? Cannot the smoothness of British political life and the absence of obvious crises during the twenty-five years following World War II be said to have concealed from the British public the seriousness of their country's situation and the extent of its diminution?

GREAT BRITAIN'S ECONOMY is a case in point. For more than two decades its maladies have been mitigated, but not cured, by skilful manipulation using the techniques that were the bequest of Lord Keynes. Just how skilful the bureaucratic managers were can be seen if we remember the dark prognostications about Britain's economic future made during the War years even by Keynes himself and the talk about "Schachtian" solutions for Britain then current among British officials. But, nevertheless, nothing was solved, and the social consequences of a British standard of living which has fallen behind that of its neighbours are now plain to see. It is therefore reasonable to ask—as the present writer asked in a book published a decade ago[8]—whether the constant postponement of economic disaster during these years was an unmitigated blessing. Would it not have been better to have had a crisis which put squarely before the British people what the alternatives were? For it is an understandable temptation for political leaders to accept lethargy and call it consensus—to remain in a state of indecision and call it moderation.

HERE PERHAPS THE CASE of Great Britain rejoins that of other countries in Western Europe. In time of War a democratic state can call upon the spirit of sacrifice of its citizens with some hope that the message will be heard and answered. And the success it gains by victory

[7] Siegfried's description of English defects is, indeed, so exact an anticipation of those many writers who, in the 1960s and '70s, have analysed "*le mal anglais*" that it is hard not to suspect a direct literary influence. His book started forty years of Jeremiads, and it remains the most original of the lot.

[8] Anthony Hartley, *A State of England* (Hutchinson, 1963).

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enhances its prestige and increases its authority, building up a generation of statesmen whose reputations continue to give lustre to institutions or to facilitate the resolution of crisis for a number of years after the end of hostilities. In time of peace the process is reversed. Not only can the state not persuade its citizens to make the sacrifices required to deal with inflation or secure greater productivity, but competition among political parties implies that any government demanding such sacrifices from the electorate will damage itself and advantage its opponents. Economic ills are put down to forces of darkness identified on a class basis—to the misdeeds of capitalism or the selfishness of trades unions—and the individual feels himself under no moral compulsion to mend a state of affairs which he attributes to other people.

Moreover, the fact that the modern state has extended itself into wider and wider fields of responsibility means that it incurs a loss of prestige and an alienation of its citizens from "the System" for failures in the working of advanced industrial society which are quite beyond its control. Thus there is a constant erosion of the prestige of institutions and of the authority of statesmen. A Gladstone or a Disraeli could last as a potent force in English political life throughout many years of the 19th century. Modern prime ministers are used up in half a decade, a process to which the mass media powerfully contribute.

SOCIETIES WHICH DEPEND upon the consent of their citizens to measures designed to resolve their economic problems and to mediate the clash of interest groups thus tend to enter into a vicious circle. The more the prestige of institutions and political leaders is diminished, the less easily consent to effective policies will be obtained. The less easily such policies can be carried through, the less success will attend politicians and political systems and the more their reputations will be damaged in the eyes of the general public. A descending spiral of discredit will lead to—what?

There is no need to regard such a cycle as inevitable, though history seems to show the extreme difficulty of restoring the reputation of political systems once they have begun to be discredited. But it would be foolish to neglect the fact that, in most democratic countries (as well as in some that are not democratic) a question of political authority is now posed which must be answered if institutional continuity is to be preserved.

AT THIS POINT it is possible to return to Elie Halévy. For what his account of the renewal of the English political system in the early 19th century suggests is that this kind of re-melting of society into a working body politic can only take place under the impulsion of strong moral or religious beliefs and with the aid of a coherent body of reforming thought. It is on the intensity of the individual commitment to the social virtues that the carrying of them into practice at moments of crisis will depend. A man's honesty in the handling of public money—to take one instance of civic sense—will depend upon the standard of his honesty in general, and no institutional devices designed to prevent speculation will be half as effective as a deeply held conviction that such practices are wrong. In other words, in addition to the nature of the public institutions of a system of government, there is a strong private, cultural content to their actual working which decides whether that system acts constructively and harmoniously upon society at large or whether (as in the late Roman Empire) increasingly inefficient political and administrative machinery is felt as more and more of a burden by the people under its sway.

However divergent their metaphysical views, Halévy's Evangelicals and Utilitarians exerted themselves manfully to improve society in the name of a puritanical personal morality and a concept of duty which was equally directed towards their neighbours and towards their own worldly achievements. To ask contemporary societies to develop the same intensity of feeling with a view to solving their problems is a little like asking a man to lift himself up by his bootstraps. And were it not for the sheer unexpectedness and diversity of history, we might conclude that the process of political and social renewal which Halévy described and which we call "19th-century liberalism" could not occur again and that the wheels of government will increasingly be forced round by the clanking paraphernalia of a Byzantine bureaucracy.

Yet Halévy's book inculcates a familiar lesson: that those who think and those who meditate constitute the true influence on human affairs. And it is possible that far from the bubble reputations of politicians, alternately swollen by public relations and punctured by newspapers, beneath the heavy—perhaps doomed—apparatus of the modern state, there may well exist a principle of renovation in Western societies whose roots will be found in a personal *ascesis*. It is from a more acute consciousness on the part of the individual citizen of his own durable passions and desires and of the type of society apt to satisfy them that we should expect social renewal to spring.

Such, at least, must be the hope. For, in advanced industrial societies, the psychology of political life is terribly against us. To expect political and social systems to work like slot-machines, as we

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now do, is to condemn them to failure. Only an intense personal effort can make them living organisms. The question is: What motives can inspire such an effort? Merely to put the dilemma of the modern state in these terms is to become aware of how far Halévy can lead us and to what extent the conclusions he drew from history supply a missing element in political thought today. Perhaps we shall not know again the spontaneity of reform he describes. But we can, at least, be made conscious of what we lose in its absence.

Unreal City

Pussy cat, pussy cat
I know London was there
for carved like a mouse
on a kitchen chair
I heard my father
across the water speak
of dogs in Club Row
whitewashed to keep
their spots from showing

Cat, my father knew London
like the back of a hand
in a backstreet pub
turned over to sell
the cracks of the Union Canal

I do not think he'd ever seen
St Paul's, The Tower or
the Queen, and the Guards
could change to red-eyed
stoats before he'd cross
a bridge to look

He left in a stinging fog
carrying pincers and pliers
to twist together
the tattered ends
of all the City's wires

Cat, do you remember
when we had a King
with a Jubilee and ate tea
in the streets and ran races
and scrambled for pennies?

Do you remember when
Sunday was a noise of bells
and a one-armed rag-and-bone man
sang the same song
from Aldgate to the Old Kent Road?
What has happened since then?

His bones are on a London Hill
built over by a block of flats
and that square mile
is the concrete cell
where I sat to sew bread and water

Cat, why can't God afford to live
in these churches any more?
Why does the Queen get older
all the time? Pussy cat
where have you been?
I have a mouse still waiting
to hide and a childhood
dying of nursery rhymes.

Edwin Brock

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The Ludicrous & the Absurd

Two French Films—By JOHN WEIGHTMAN

GROWING OLD is a strange enough experience in one culture. Things you took for granted dissolve before your eyes, landscapes change, buildings you lived and worked in are wiped off the map, people talk and react differently, and in the end you get to the point of wondering if what you remember of the distant past actually happened or is a recollection of a dream or a figment of the imagination. Strange but banal, and one of the most hackneyed themes in literature. But it is a still stranger experience when you have tried to straddle two countries and two cultures, and feel yourself, as it were, growing old twice over in different contexts. I frequently have this sensation now in relation to France. Where is the Frenchness I once thought I understood? Obviously, I no sooner got the hang of it than it began to change into something else. I am often as flummoxed as General de Gaulle was when faced with the Events of May, although he was an octogenarian and my eightieth birthday is still some way off. For instance, I listen to a young French professor giving a lecture, and only by making a conscious effort and bringing into play what I know of De Saussure, Lacan and Barthes (who have nothing to do with the ostensible subject) can I eventually work out how his apparently random discourse, based on semiological associationism rather than logical thought, has evolved away from the academic practices of forty years ago. Or I go to the cinema—here I am coming to the point—and a French film I would have expected to collapse under the weight of its own silliness turns out to be an enormous commercial success.

It so happens that I saw *Emmanuelle* in Paris during the first week of its run, and I heard hardly a snigger in the huge, packed cinema. I was astonished that gales of Gallic mirth did not blow away the nonsense. I would have understood a *succès de ridicule*, but no, the film seems to have sailed solemnly on, accepted by the general public as a valid combination of permissiveness and the picturesque. It is now established in London at the Prince Charles Cinema, in succession to *Last Tango in Paris*. Incidentally, while we are on the subject of the changes wrought by time, who would have guessed 25 years ago that the eponymic house of entertainment of the heir to the throne would be occupied by glossy porn, and no one raise an eyebrow?

WHETHER OR NOT the original book by Emanuelle Arsan and the film itself by Just Jaeckin are deliberate spoofs thought up by clever people, in the manner of Boris Vian's *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*, it is impossible to say, but the suspicion does cross the mind. The film, at least, appears to have been concocted just as consciously to exploit a double theme as the James Bond money-spinners were meant as a blend of violence and technology. It is a straightforward combination of sex with exotic gracious living. Emmanuelle is first seen in her luxurious Parisian apartment, breasts and pubis casually to the fore, preparing to join her wealthy diplomat-playboy husband in Bangkok. The punning possibilities of this name are presumably intended as an additional bonus for the international, English-speaking public. On the way out, she is seduced in the plane by two different but interchangeable young men who never say a word, once in the row of seats she conveniently has to herself, and once at an uncomfortable angle in the lavatory, but a jet loo at 7,000 feet no doubt counts as gracious. As soon as she arrives at her splendid house in Thailand, she unites with her handsome husband on a transparently veiled bed, while the servants peep and giggle and are stimulated to imitation. After an exquisite dinner, the same servants are dismissed with a clap of the hands so that Emmanuelle, dreamy-eyed, can slide down obliquely to render her husband a particular service. During all this, she maintains the same hesitant look of slightly speculative innocence, and one wonders how many times more the background music will have to pound to a thumping climax before the light of comprehension dawns on her face. Actually, it never does. A young *fausse ingénue* calls in for fruit-drinks and masturbation; an older Lesbian introduces

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Emmanuelle to squash, followed by tickle; elegant cocktail-parties steam with suggestiveness, but still she remains essentially unawakened.

It is about this point that we begin to realise the ghost-like presence of a higher purpose. Mme Arsan must have read *L'Histoire d'O*, or at least heard of it, because it becomes clear that although Emmanuelle does nothing but copulate, she is not performing in quite the right spirit. She is not turning sex into an ascesis; she is not combining the mysterious East, superlative interior decoration and exquisite gowns with the full genital revelation. She must graduate from the elementary vigour of her husband and casual afternoon Lesbianism to more serious matters.

As a first stage, she has an intense affair with a second Lesbian, an anthropologist, and, in the intervals of digging up Thai remains, they compose pretty moving patterns on their camp bed. But Emmanuelle makes the mistake of becoming attached to the anthropologist who, being further advanced along the road to emancipation, knows that genital wisdom must be universal and not limited to any one individual. Emmanuelle, although by now—one would have thought—moderately universalised, comes back to town to consult the local French sex-guru, a middle-aged man with a deep voice and measured enunciation, none other in fact than Alain Cuny, best known for his interpretation of the name-part in Paul Claudel's *Tête d'or*. It is rather as if an actor who had achieved fame as Thomas-à-Becket in *Murder in the Cathedral* were suddenly to turn up in the film of *Oh Calcutta!*, speaking in the same solemn tones. Cuny helps Emmanuelle to final enlightenment by conducting her on a boat-tour (Virgil and Dante?) of the low dives of Bangkok. There she submits to rape by dark strangers and tucks up her long white evening dress to be publicly sodomised by a victorious Thai pugilist, while Cuny looks wisely on with immense understanding.

Perhaps, after all, this aesthetically photographed sado-masochistic mush is no worse than old-fashioned sentimental films, which were false in a different way. Each period no doubt has to have its appropriate rubbish, and *Emmanuelle* is at least to some extent a low-brow reflection of certain high-brow preoccupations. But what a curious conjunction of the high and the low! One French critic said of M. Cuny's presence in the film: *On se demande ce qu'il est allé faire dans ces sampans*. The last time I heard M. Cuny's unmistakable voice, he was explaining on the radio how he was finding it difficult to finance his projected film version of Claudel's religious allegory, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*. So he is possibly in this *galère* to make the flesh serve the spirit, literally to use *Emmanuelle* to subsidise Emmanuel. As the French sometimes say, the Devil will have difficulty in recognising his own.

WITH THE OTHER NOTABLE French film now running in London, Jean Eustache's three-and-a-half-hour marathon, *La Maman et la Putain* (Continentale), I am glad to say I feel much more at home. I take it to be a genuine film, an honest, tragi-comic attempt to express an aspect of the continuing dilemma of the Post-Absurdist generation. Jean-Pierre Léaud, who plays the hero, has been condemned in several English reviews as the sort of unbearable young Frenchman who gets everybody's goat, but he reminds me of so many people I have known and quite liked that it did not occur to me to judge him. I watched and listened with fascination to discover what new twists would be given to the endless saga of the Outsider/Insider, launched on St Germain des Prés so many years ago by Sartre and Camus. It is interesting to see that the character is still going quite strong and still popping in and out of the Flore and the Deux Magots. I have a suspicion that the Absurd, being a fundamental perception, is here to stay, and is re-emerging in a more general form after being deflected into the stylistic exercises of the New Novel.

Alexandre (Léaud) is revealed as an idle but fully occupied young man living at the expense of his rather older mistress, Marie (beautifully played by Bernadette Laffont), in a tiny one-roomed flat where, in the modern manner, everything is kept on the floor and the man walks straight on to the bed in his boots, being in all respects totally anti-bourgeois. Marie runs a *boutique*, is a good cook when she puts her mind to the task, and leaves Alexandre on a very long lead, although not without certain spasms of irritation. It is significant, I think, that they habitually address each other as *vous* and not *tu*; this unusual formality seems to indicate that Marie knows she is keeping Alexandre and he recognises he is being kept, but that this fact should not be allowed to lower the tone of the relationship. It never occurs to Alexandre, or to the one or two men-friends he meets in cafés or in their similar one-roomed flats, that they should actually *do* anything. What could a right-minded person do? There is nothing to be done, except converse, cultivate relationships, listen to the radio or records and occasionally read a book in a café in the afternoon, although Alexandre is clearly no great reader, since he is still busy on a volume of *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

A POINT the long and wordy film puts over most successfully—at least for me, although it apparent-

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ly drives some Englishmen wild with exasperation—is the French ability to spin intellectual interest out of nothingness. Why does Marie hang on to Alexandre? He is competent as a lover, of course, and more than that he talks, but without ever saying the flatly obvious thing. He is quirky, he skirts deftly round the unsayable or that which ought not to be said, except on those intermittent occasions when a row is the best solution and needs to be conducted thoroughly and with a proper regard for rhetoric. From a certain French point of view, Alexandre is the reverse of boring. He is a descendant, through the Absurdists, of those 19th-century dandies who were so afraid of boredom that they tried to order every minute of the day and every inflection of their speech. Alexandre is not as deliberate as that—to be so would savour of old-fashioned stiffness—but every remark must have an edge to it, nothing must be "square." The most idle of his conversations with his men-friends constitutes a subtle game in which the conventions of Absurdism are strictly respected. The only positive seriousness allowed is the search for ideal love.

Alexandre has a Don Juan complex, which is perfectly consonant with Absurdism, since it is enshrined in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and is not simply a legacy from the French folk tradition. While Marie is earning their living, he enhances his personality by cultivating other girls. We first see him pursuing an old flame, Gilberte, who is giving him up to marry a more responsible, duller man, capable of providing her with a home. Alexandre plays the game of despair with moderate conviction, but his eye is soon caught by Véronique, a blonde hospital nurse, an orphan of Polish origin, who interests him by her mixture of demureness and acquiescence. When Marie goes on a business trip to London, Véronique moves into the flat for a few days.

The plot now thickens, because Véronique is just as much an Absurdist as Alexandre, but in her female way. She holds down her job as a nurse efficiently, but she drinks, is totally promiscuous in her search for human contacts, and has no sense of discretion. As Alexandre wrily comments, he had thought that people who actually worked for their living were better balanced than that. It is all right for him to depend on Marie as his *maman*; it is another matter for him to become the reliable male on whom this *putain* would depend to escape from her whoredom. Véronique invades his relationship with Marie and a three-cornered situation ensues, with a mixture of limbs in the bed, quarrels, shifting alliances and an attempted suicide on the part of Marie. Finally, Véronique delivers herself of a long, drunken tirade in which she proclaims, unexpectedly, the non-Absurdist principle that love only makes sense if it leads to babies and domestic bliss. She goes off, and Alexandre has to follow her, while Marie, propped in a meditative position against the wall, listens right through to a cracked record of Piaf singing *Les Amants de Paris*. There is no conclusion; Véronique may, or may not, be pregnant; in either case, Alexandre will presumably have to come back to Marie.

A FILM WHICH BEGAN in the ironical mode ends, then, in a sort of messy half-tragedy. But this does not in any way detract from its quality. As each incident develops, as if improvised but always with a careful respect for truth, the film takes on a lyrical, bitter-sweet flavour, not unlike that of Truffaut's *Jules et Jim*, which is the comparable tragi-comedy of another triangle composed of two men and one woman. Besides, the tragedy has been gradually building up; one of Alexandre's female acquaintances who frequents the same cafés, and whom we have only seen laughing and joking, suddenly murders her lover for no apparent reason. Alexandre comments on the fact that his former band of friends is now sadly depleted through suicide, marriage, work and departures for America.

Poetic Absurdism, which holds responsibility at bay and creates a delicate fabric of personal independence in defiance of the laws of realism, is only possible as a sort of prolonged adolescence. If Alexandre cannot grow up and fuse Absurdism with acceptance of ordinary life and society, he will either have to choose some form of death or decline into seedy middle-age between the two female figures of the mother and the whore.

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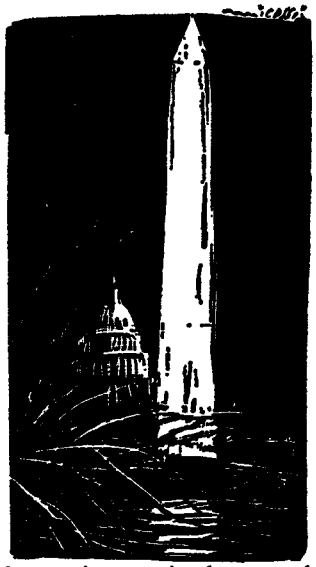
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

A Symposium

Aspects of Amerenglish

Hugh Brogan:



AT LEAST since Byron's time (he was fascinated by the Americanism, "I guess . . .") the English have been aware that a foreign language was current across the Atlantic, and over the years they have acquired a certain familiarity with it, even a certain relish. To judge from Ian Ball's article ("Amerenglish", ENCOUNTER, October), Americans are at last acquiring an interest in the opposite phenomenon, an alien mother-tongue. The book he discusses, *British Self-Taught*, is an excellent omen; but oh dear! they have a long way to go.

For example, Mr Townsend Hoopes, in a recent study of John Foster Dulles, quotes Winston Churchill as saying that

> ". . . Dulles is the only case of a bull I know who carries his china closet with him."

Clearly this is all wrong: Churchill was too fine a stylist to substitute the absurdly impossible *closet* (American for *cupboard*) for the traditional and convincing *shop*. Also the cadence seems wrong: Would he not have put "I know" *before* instead of after the bull?

> "John Foster Dulles is the only case I know of a bull who carries his china-shop with him."

I presume that an American was conscientiously trying to recapture the great man's words from a scribbled note ("Dulles—bull—china") and didn't know enough to allow for the difference in idiom. Or he may not even have heard what was actually said. Notoriously, instead of truly listening, we pick up signals from each other's speech, and interpret their meaning to suit ourselves—whence wars, divorces, and so on. Whoever it was may in fact have heard *china closet*, though Churchill never said it.

But these considerations are the mere gilding of the subject. Mr Ball plays variations on an ancient theme, but he hasn't really mastered the tune (rudely, I suggest that it is because he is Australian-born and lives in New York). There is—I shouldn't need to say this in ENCOUNTER—no such thing as British English. There is Mandarin, such as I am writing now, which is the standard medium of communication between the educated of Britain, America, Australia, and elsewhere. There is regional English; and there is class English. This last, of course, is a phenomenon which has always interested the islanders most. Hence Shaw's remark that "it is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman despise him." The enquiring American won't get very far until he has mastered its rudiments. (He could do worse than read *Pygmalion*, and Nancy Mitford.) On this all-important matter Mr Ball, who can use the ugh-phrase "different than", strikes me as a very unsafe guide. It's not only Marchionesses who say *pudding* rather than either *sweet* or *afters* (shudder). I don't think he's very expert on current usage either: when did anyone last hear the word *pantechnicon*? And never in all my life have I heard anyone speak of a *facia panel*.

Yet this is still trifling, of the kind practised by that inverted snob, H. L. Mencken. Let us change our grammar and add to our word-hoard as we like: we probably have good reason. I say *movie* nowadays rather than *film* in tribute to Hollywood's achievements and as a way of slighting the appalling British cinema, which can't make a *movie* to save its life. This sort of importation arises from the need to express meaning. What worries me is the rapid collapse of Mandarin English, which is being brought about by the inability of notionally educated people even to achieve meaning, let alone express it. They don't know what they think they think, and if they did they could not convey it, having lost the very conception of language. They have slang, they have jargon, inevitable and frequently useful instruments; but as to language in the supreme sense they are dumb (*Ang.*) and therefore dumb (US).

By a horrible irony the chief source of this

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pollution is the academy, which ought to be the chief filter. In a recent *Times Literary Supplement* Geoffrey Elton quotes this characteristic gem:

> ". . . remitted the statute to subsidiary validity as against contrary local practice."

That kind of thing is surely too uncouth even for British Rail ("*this train terminates here*"), but it is sanctioned by Harvard. Not that it is a purely American vice. There is mud in the Thames too, and the most fearful mystifications come nowadays from Paris, where advanced thinkers, having elected since 1945 to think nonsense, have with national logic devised a nonsense-language to suit. ("Impenetrability! That's what *I* say!"). Only those who have tried to edit an article by a Left Bank philosopher know what suffering is.

I should like to see a Transatlantic Crusade, in the name of Amerenglish lucidity, against Continental poppycock. Once more the Anglo-Saxons would stand alone against a Europe plunged in darkness. Once more they could do the world great service. And in the battle they would soon learn to cherish their own trifling variations of usage as the charming graces of life which they are—like variations in eighteenth-century architecture.

Ian Robinson:

MR BALL'S FINAL QUESTION was "Who really should have the upper hand in deciding the future of English?" The answer to hope for is surely "Nobody", for if the future of English is to be *decided* we are in an even worse way than I thought. But though a living language cannot be arranged it can vary in its state of health, and one bad symptom is a loss of nerve in the cultivated and/or ruling classes who bear a special responsibility for the way the language moves.

It is a good thing that the two liveliest branches of English should influence one another: the alarming thing about Americanisms in England is the deliberateness with which they are forced upon people who won't speak American. They insist. Who? The powers that be? The spirit of the age? Somewhere along the linguistic line this must always be individual people in influential positions, defining themselves (and/or losing themselves) in their sense of how English should go. Why do people insist on Americanisms as if they are somehow the only proper thing, like latinate terms in medicine—rather than letting them happen or resisting them, criticising, loving or hating them?

Everybody in England says *lorries* but the BBC decrees *trucks*. Nobody in England talks about *canned* food but you don't see supermarket notices about *tins*. A sentence of *transportation* in England is not a joke about a public service but exile to the antipodean penal settlements; but if an English official says, "Transportation must be increased in the city to ease population congestion" he most likely means buses.

I don't mind English editions of American books (though it's odd that the latest work of so un-American an author as Solzhenitsyn should have been typeset and issued by an old-established Scottish firm in a very American translation). But is there not something funny when the English Professor Steven Rose's English publishers (they also publish the Prime Minister) bring out his *Conscious Brain* in immaculate American spelling?

The Americanism that most positively annoys me, I'm not sure why, is *do have* for English *have got*. In English *do have*, in the sense I am referring to, is a kind of present imperfect: "Do you have *The Guardian*? Do you have the 'flu?" implies a temporal adverb (often, usually . . .)—but in American English refers to the present occasion only, *anglice* "Have you got . . . ?" Americans are therefore surprised to receive English answers like "*Yes, but not today*" or "*Occasionally*" to the "Do-you-have . . . ?" questions above. Why is it suddenly good for us to drop the *have got* form, a useful bit of our language?

The other I most hate is *home* for *house*. This was noted in America as long ago as Bloomfield's *Language* (1933), but here I have the impression it is quite recent. British house-agents are suddenly selling *homes*, though nobody says they're going to buy a new home; and I object because of the damage done to a very good concept, in the interests of sham commercial bonhomie. How can you in English buy a home any more than love or Killarney? You can buy a house and hope to make your home there. *Home* for *house* was propagated with especial fervour and unction by the Conservative Party's recent promise to reduce the interest on *home-loans* to 9½%. But when in an election broadcast they interviewed an "ordinary voter" she, like everyone else, spoke about houses.

IF IT HAD BEEN POSSIBLE, our accession to "Europe" would surely have been celebrated with a flood of Franglais rather than Amerenglish: the latter belongs with the imposition of French weights and measures. (And do you remember those long winters when the Labour Party in its European mood tried to do away with Greenwich mean time?) These are all little instances of a sort of paradoxical enforcement of lost nerve.

On the one hand our ruling élite are so unsure of their own language (*i.e.* of themselves) that

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they have a vague feeling that all is up with our life and everybody else's must be better. On the other hand this is felt with the confidence of a ruling class and imposed on the rest of us. In its minor way English adoption of Americanisms is our usual establishment of chaos or institutionalisation of anarchy. If it went far enough anything spoken here, American or English, would have little sense. But the influence of the powers that be does not go so far and, thank God, English is tougher than they are. (Not that anything has to be very tough to be tougher than our ruling class. . . .)

Honor Tracy:

I AM UNABLE to comment usefully on the difficulties of "Amerenglish writers" because, whatever this curious species may be, I do not belong to it. I am an English writer, happy in an American publisher for whom that appears to be good enough. If the editor thinks that a word or phrase may be unintelligible to the American public, she refers it to me and I replace it with another, still an English one, or give an explanation. A former, very dear, editor there once forgot herself so far as to query the "Anglicisms" in my text: I wrote at once, pointing out the impropriety of this, and received a charming apology.

English, let us be clear about it, is the language of the English people. American usage of it, often racy, vivid, pungent, is a dialect. In his amusing article on the subject, Ian Ball quotes H. L. Mencken to the effect that the reverse is true because Americans are the more numerous. This is democracy run mad, on a level with the assertion that "*x* million people can't be wrong", whereas of course they can be and usually are. It is doubtful indeed if this dialect should even be called "American", a term more applicable surely to the tongue or tongues of the country's rightful owners, Sioux, Apaches, Iroquois, *et al.*

But if there is no problem, to use an American key-word, for me in the writing of "Amerenglish", there is apt to be more than one in the reading of it; for instance, how to keep my blood pressure down or to bite back sudden rude oaths in public places. That is, naturally, when it crops up in an English publication, as nowadays all too frequently happens. I am all for American words if they are better (*ice-box* for refrigerator), or if they fill a gap (*commuter*), or are tangy (*bread, fuzz, payola, sourpuss*) and—a favourite of mine—*pad*). What I cannot abide is to read in one of our own papers that a house has been *burglarised* rather than burgled (and any minute now I fear it will be a *burglarisation* instead of a burglary), or that someone has been *pressurised* into doing something, or that a matter has been *processed* rather than dealt with. One paper even advertises itself with an American-Yiddish turn of phrase, *Dull, It Isn't*, and I have seen Britons referred to in its pages as *Britishers*, which is Yiddish again.

I dislike the superfluous prepositions dotted so freely about, as in German: think *up* an answer, face *up* to a difficulty, start *in* on a job. Then there is a preference for the woolly and pretentious over the clear and simple: people *share their thinking* rather than discuss, or *improve their image* rather than earn a good name, or *analyse a project in depth*, which only means to consider a plan for more than about five minutes. Adjectives are used as nouns (prices reach an all-time *high*), nouns are put to work as verbs (we *proposition* instead of propose), or are made into adverbs by adding the suffix *-wise* (a bloodcurdling specimen of this, I recently saw, was *probability-wise*). Then there is the outrageous misuse of hopefully and regretfully: "They told me that he would hopefully come, but regretfully he did not." And, equally horrid, "Have you any cigarettes? because I don't."

THE ABOVE IS a short list of my *bêtes noires*, and no doubt many people could compile others for themselves. The headmistress of my school was fond of telling us that inaccuracy of language led to sloppiness of thought. Perhaps she was right, perhaps it is the other way round, but both are present in force today, powerfully encouraged by the transatlantic example. Americans no longer seem to know how sentences should be put together, and, while their vocabulary may enrich, their construction increasingly blunts and coarsens.

This is by no means to say that the fault is theirs alone. In our schools now, Latin is so little and English so badly taught that the young have no chance of learning correct and seemly usage. And it is possible too that languages, like other growths, lose their vigour with time. There was a great bellringing and thanksgiving for the New Bible some years ago; but, excellent scholarly work though it is, we have only to read a chapter of it, and then one of the Authorised Version, to realise how the sap has dwindled.

HUGH BROGAN *teaches history at the University of Essex; he is the author of "Tocqueville" (1973). . . .*

IAN ROBINSON *is Lecturer in English at the University of Swansea and author of the much-discussed "The Survival of English" (1973). . . .*

HONOR TRACY *is a journalist and novelist. Among her recent works are "Winter in Castille" and "Mind You, I've Said Nothing!" (1973). She lives in Ireland.*

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Constantine FitzGibbon:

FOR FIFTY YEARS a United States citizen, educated partly in England, and for the last ten years or so resident in Ireland, I have become totally bewildered as to what is, or is not, the English language, English usage and acceptable metaphor, let alone slang, if one wishes to be understood or, at least, not misunderstood. When first plunged into an English prep school, at the age of 9, and before going to an English public school—which of course in America would be a private school—and being at that age more accustomed to speaking French than English, I immediately came across the misery in an intensity I have never known since. "*Please, Sir—*" with hand raised—"*may I go to the bathroom?*" The terrifying, sadistic master who was trying to teach us French, a language I knew far better than did he, did not of course miss this opportunity of revenge: what, he asked, did I wish to do, take a bath?

Some fifteen years later, when attached to General Bradley's staff, I was occasionally called in to interpret, not just French or German, but English. What, I would be asked, did General Montgomery mean by such phrases in his communications to us as: "*hitting Rundstedt for six,*" or that "*Panzer Gruppe West had gone for a Burton,*" or, once, that General Model seemed to be *very keen.* We were more punctilious: we never replied that, so far as we could see, Model was unlikely *to make first base.*

However I disagree with Mr Ball that American usage is snappier than is British. True, educated Americans do not often say: "I read in the newspaper where it says that . . .", but they will, they will talk about horse-back-riding and ice-skating and indeed use many similar lugubrious methods of making their meaning clear over and above the call of duty. Perhaps that is why American books, particularly those of academics, are often so very, very long. This cannot be totally blamed on the German ancestry of so many academics, determined to be as obscure and boring in English as were their grandfathers in the Fatherland, and without the long cut to tedium of putting the verb at the end of the sentence.

It can creep into the household. My wife comes from California. When on occasion I grumble about a turn of her phrase ("Bad for the children, doncherno!") she can always overtrump me by saying that it is perfectly correct Californian usage. How can I deny this? I was only born in Massachusetts. And, long ago, a woman from Kansas informed me that New Englanders are not *really*, or reely, Americans at all.

As for the spellings to which Mr Ball devoted such exhaustive and no doubt exhausting attention, I can only say that I care not a fig nor a good God damn. If a reader fails to follow my meaning when I write either "colour" or "color", I would just as soon he did not try to read my books at all. He would obviously take any number of wooden nickels and almost certainly would not know his brass from his oboe.

John Crosby:

HOW'D YOU MISS "ass" for "arse"? I keep getting hell from the readers for using terrible Americanisms like "up to my ass in" which I persist in because I claim "arse" is unpronounceable.

And the day will never come when they get me to say or even write "quieten" in place of our quite sensible "quiet." Can you imagine shouting at the children: *"Quieten down! I'm trying to listen to the wireless!"* Oh, yes, wireless. I have adopted wireless because it has a lovely antique sound, and my wife who is British says radio—so there you are.

Robert Conquest:

I CHANCE TO HAVE BEEN BORN in England of an American father and an English mother—even being that rather rare creature, a dual national. I have heard both American and British English all my life from aunts, cousins, friends, colleagues. No difficulty there; but how can one account for the extraordinary fact that everyone who actually writes about Anglo-American linguistic differences always seems to *get things wrong*? Even Americans who know British quite well do this. Harry Harrison, the science fiction writer, is a true Transatlantic Man (and not only through his fictional Tunnel). In the bulletin of the Science Fiction Writers of America, of which I am a member, I noticed him the other day explaining that the chorus of "The Good Ship Venus" contained the phrase "there's bugger else to do", which (he explained) meant "nothing else." Needless to say no such usage exists in England: it must be "bugger *all*" else—as in Dylan Thomas' back-reading "Llareggub."

Naturally, unfair though it may be to his general argument, similar misapprehensions are what stand out in Mr Ball's article. For example, his list of ambush words for American friends, "confined" (as he puts it) to the "most crucial ones", is full of bad signs—*prang* and *gone for a Burton* and *gen* are about as much current English as *strafe* and *maffick*. One is reminded, it must be

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admitted, of those equal and opposite guides for Englishmen which teach them the correct way of using "twenty-three skidoo."

That you must use "afters" or "sweet" and not say "dessert" (leaving aside all the Mitford "U" problems notoriously involved here) is a confusion—and unimportant and scarcely capable of misleading even at that level. "Unisex" is clearly just a highly temporary media-jargon phrase. "Apartment" has long been in use in England. Naturally, "mini" started here and "Afro" over there: simply because the things themselves did. Nor is he right about "pussy." I remember a friend in my regiment, who was in a convalescent hospital at Salerno in the War, telling me of a nun who was going through the wards collecting for some charity. She was having astonishing success, and as she approached my friend saw why. She was carrying the appeal for the children's home, or whatever, round her neck; and it was naturally written in Italian. Some kind soldier had added a translation under it: "You can stroke my ginger pussy." As for distinctions like that between "ice water" and "iced water": Dr Johnson wrote of an "armed chair", where we say "armchair." These are trivial and natural evolutions which must start somewhere, and they matter little. The intermediate time when both are in use is one for pleasurable and pedantic argument, rather than for real misunderstanding.

By far the largest proportion of words that cause Mr Ball's Americans trouble are parts of cars. Come to that, my own French is still good enough to do live interviews on television but (like practically all Anglo-Saxons) I am quite lost with the French terms in this field. That has never really caused me trouble driving in France. Indeed hundreds and thousands of Englishmen, with hardly a word of any sort of French, manage to do the same. For even true linguistic barriers are exaggerated. If you need to know, you know. Every waiter in a central European town like Bratislava or Temesvar has, or had, to speak three languages fairly fluently. . . .

As for Anglo-American differences, there are a bare handful of words which might cause trouble —a "barrier" a quarter-of-an-inch high. Besides, it is absurd not to distinguish between local or professional slang and genuine linguistic differences. How—and why—should an American know what is meant by "a fourpenny one"? But at least that is a real usage; just as, if warning needs to be given at all, Mr Ball would have been better advised to have warned of words like *bint* and *shufty*, or indeed native Anglicisms like *yob* or *yobbo*, and their more recent parallels *yag* and *yaggo*.

CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON *is the author of numerous works of fiction, biography, and history.* . . . JOHN CROSBY, *who writes a weekly column for "The Observer", is an American journalist living in England.* . . . ROBERT CONQUEST *is a poet and historian; his books include "The Great Terror" (1968).* . . . JAN MORRIS'S *most recent book is "Conundrum"; she is completing an historical trilogy on the British Empire.* . . . D. J. ENRIGHT *is a director of Chatto & Windus, and a former editor of* ENCOUNTER. *His writings include novels, poetry, travel, and literary criticism.*

HOW HORRIFYING it is to be told that there is a 474-page book called *British Self-Taught*. One knows these compilations, and how they have to pad out the tiny amount of worthwhile material, with, for example, non-existent rhyming slang. There are perhaps ten or a dozen more or less authentic examples of this, even including words like *scarper*, *berk*, and *loaf*. None of the others could conceivably be heard by any American who had not chosen to billet himself on an ancient blabber-mouth of a Cockney comedian.

One could equally draw up lists of idioms and words which cause trouble as between different parts of Britain or different parts of America. The Scotch (and nuts to "Scottish") usage of *shall* and *will* is different from the English (as in the notorious "*I will drown and nobody shall save me*"). There are Welsh, Geordie, West Country, East Anglian oddities and variants. A "gill" is even a different measure of beer in different parts of the country. But we don't have to carry half-a-dozen dictionaries on a trip from Tynemouth to Tavistock, even by way of Turnham Green.

And accent is at least as divisive as vocabulary. I once had a platoon consisting almost entirely of Cornishmen; it took days before communication was established. A Virginian cousin, on the other side, tells me of trying to find a place in Pennsylvania. He asked a local where the "*coat hahse*" was and only after several repetitions did the other man cry in astonishment, "Oh you mean the *corrt heaouse!*". Similarly, in one of Peter de Vries' novels there is a misunderstanding when a Southerner quotes *Tom* as an authority—it turns out he means *Tom Magazine*.

More generally, Americanisms and Anglicisms properly speaking are, as I said, a very minor and easily adjustable matter. Some travel, others remain local. And why not? But even with the slangiest idioms, Hilaire Belloc's comment usually applies. In his introduction to Damon Runyon—and the difference between their idioms must have been incomparably greater than those which we have been discussing—Belloc says, "Even if a term or a phrase is unfamiliar, the context tells you instantly what it means." In

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fact, the differences don't matter much, and Americans would do better just to pick them up naturally.

There is indeed an American dialect (with a less developed British sub-species) which is barely comprehensible—academese. But that is no more to be held against American or British English as such than would be the difficulties any of us might encounter in conversation with a paraphasic or a deaf-mute.

Jan Morris:

Across the sea the electric message hums:
Asses is donkeys—Arses is bums.

D. J. Enright:

MY WORRIES are of a different sort. But, to start where Mr Ball does: *disc jockey payola. Payola* I'm not dead keen on; it sounds like "pianola"; or something specifically Italian or Sicilian; and there are already effective expressions like "rake-off" and "kick-back", and "douceur" (too elegant, perhaps?), and "dash" (but solely verbal, I believe, and, of course, tainted with the "colonialist mentality"). But *disc jockey* is a splendid coinage, a (if the adjective won't damn it) poetic image, and deserves not merely to enter the language but to stay there. (But not, please, in the form "d.j.", which is pre(-)empted.) When we talk about a disc jockey we must call him a disc jockey. The question is—how often are we going to talk about him?

New words in particular need to be treated with caution, because of the stereotyped attitudes they can impose through sheer reiteration over our ever more powerful and insinuating media. Returning to Britain from a "new" country in which the first national fashions were slowly being created ("identity" they call it), I was struck by the way the British had fallen prey to thought-saving fashions—question-begging catchwords, month-old clichés, trendy formulae. Vulgarity was always with us, of course, and stereotypes. The difference now is that those you would expect to resist them are welcoming them—at any rate, going along with them. A far cry from those earlier days (*Culture and Environment, Reading and Discrimination*) when we were put on our guard against the clichés, special pleading, emotive appeals and ingratiating familiarities of a much less developed "mass communications"! Is the present situation a result of social/political insistence on speaking a common tongue, on avoiding anything that smacks of "snobbishness"? (But what of the blatant snob appeal of the adverts in the Sunday supplements? They must work, or why are they there?) Is it an extreme instance of leaning over backwards to be "democratic", to be "with it" instead of (as we were brought up to be) "agin it"?

To return to Mr Ball. . . . It's the things, the mental habits, we should be watching, not the words themselves. IN, therefore, with *movies* (which seem to be here to stay in one form or another) since it is more expressive than *films* (but we need *film* too); and with *commuter*, whose only weakness is its proximity to "computer" (another unsatisfactory but apparently inevitable invention); and with *paperbacks* (but let's try to preserve a world in which there is room for hardbacks too). And OUT, therefore, with *vibes*, a term which encourages the cult of irrationality, and with the expression "communicate with", which is either another advocacy of pseudo-mysticality in our relations with other people or else an assumption that if people were completely "truthful" and "honest" with one another they would live happily together ever after. . . .

Incidentally, Mr Ball asks how many third- or sixth-graders in Britain are taught that an American is not guilty of sloppy spelling when he writes *maneuver, center* or *jewelry*. I would ask: How many of them are taught spelling?

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Ante-Bellum South

Negro Slavery

By Harry G. Johnson

TO THE LITERATE intellectual, economics is known best for the "Keynesian Revolution." This is usually presented as a decisive conquest of scientific truth over primitive confusion; and is now, unfortunately (but transitorily), being nibbled and quibbled at by a motley crew of intellectual savages known as "monetarists."[1] That's the way the melodrama unfolds.

But economics during the last quarter-century has been in the process of a quiet take-over by two other more peaceful and congenial revolutions, of far more fundamental importance to the long-run development of economics as a useful social science. The better known of these is the "econometric revolution", characterised generally as the study of economic phenomena in terms of statistically-derived quantitative facts about human behaviour rather than in terms of qualitative generalisations derived by the impressions of individual and possibly unconsciously biased observers. The less well known might be described as "the theoretical missionary movement": it consists in taking seriously the assumption that, in the aggregate and in broad terms, people think and act in response to the opportunities their society offers them so as to maximise their well-being. (The truly revolutionary nature of the movement can only be fully appreciated by realising how much of our thinking about the past, present, and future of society is predicated on the assumption that large groups of our fellow men consistently act against their own self-interests and the social good as we would like to define it.)

Nowhere in economics have these two revolutions been more upsetting and more overtly controversial than in the field of economic history. This has its good reasons. The United States has been the pioneer in "the econometric revolution."[2] American economic historians have been the first to apply it to economic history, under the name of "cliometrics"; and American economic history contains, as the greatest of many great incidents, the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves. Only the Industrial Revolution in Britain, of which the emancipation of the American Negroes is in an increasingly obvious way an historically integral part, outranks it as a major formative influence on contemporary society. The economic consequences of the Industrial Revolution are still being debated among scholars. By contrast, the American cliometricians initially thought they were merely adding solidity with new quantitative techniques to a historical episode whose main qualitative contours were thoroughly established and generally agreed.

But on detailed investigation, every alleged fact about the slave system went up in smoke. The cliometricians and the traditional economic historians were unexpectedly and bitterly at war. To justify themselves, to explain the facts, and reconcile them with their own "progressive" (more accurately, perhaps "generational") views on the emerging position of the Blacks in American society, the cliometricians had to dig deep into basic economic theory, and become leaders of the theoretical missionary movement. Economic theory, meanwhile, was itself being revolutionised. Particularly apposite was the development of the concept of "human capital" by labour and education economists. They defended the idea that human skill is a form of productive resource that takes great investment of resources to create and a long period to yield its rewards.

THE DUST OF DISTRUSTFUL DEBATE has now settled; and a completely new and scientifically-validated assessment of the American slave system has now emerged. Robert W. Fogel, the dean of the cliometricians, and his colleague Stanley L. Engerman have produced a book that describes definitively the economics of American Negro slavery as now understood.[3] It is a brilliant book, beautifully written and intellectually accessible (the scholarly paraphernalia and econometric work being reserved for a companion volume). It is, in my view, an example of what modern economics strives to be, and it should be read not merely by those concerned with the American Negro and the Slave System, but by anyone seriously interested in the history and inner meaning of the capitalist system, and more generally by anyone who delights in the illumination of social phenomena by the powers of applied economic theory.

[1] See my "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Economics", ENCOUNTER, April 1971, pp. 23–33.

[2] British readers will be surprised by the fact that the cliometricians accord honour to their forebears among British economic historians only to Brinley Thomas and Henry Phelps Brown.

[3] *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* and a Supplement, *Evidence and Methods*. By ROBERT W. FOGEL and STANLEY L. ENGERMAN. Little, Brown $6.95, each.

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THE MAIN CORRECTIONS to the traditional view of slavery that emerge, paraphrased conveniently from the authors' own summary, are:

(1) Slavery was not an irrational system kept going by devotion to an autocratic way of life, but a very profitable business. It would not have collapsed for economic reasons without the use of political and military force; and it was indeed both flourishing and expected by slave-owners to continue to flourish as the Civil War approached.

(2) Slave agriculture was 35% more efficient than northern family farming, thanks to large-scale production, efficient management, intensive use of capital, and the superior efficiency and hard work of the slave compared with the white field-hand.

(3) Slavery was not incompatible with urban industrialism. The slaves were more efficient than the free workers, and slavery was expanding more rapidly in the cities than in the countryside.

(4) "The belief that slave-breeding, sexual exploitation, and promiscuity destroyed the black family is a myth." The family suited both owners and slaves. The traditional "slave market" was of minor importance compared with domestic slave-raising and migration in families (and mostly involved single adults or whole families).

(5) The lot of *all* workers at the time was deplorable by modern standards; but slaves had better material conditions than free whites of the time. Slaves were "exploited" in receiving less than their productive contribution, but they kept about 90% of what they produced.

(6) The South was *not* an economically stagnant society kept going only by slave-breeding; but an economy growing in per capita income faster than the rest of the country, which by 1860 had achieved a level not reached by Italy until the eve of World War II.

AND WHY, the missionary for economic theory asks, would we really expect anything else?

Would a really moribund survival of feudalism require the bloodiest war in all American history to destroy it? Would a system survive and flourish if the alleged beneficiaries consistently lost money, or broke even only by increasingly vicious terrorism over a vast majority of subjects who were fully aware of the presumably increasingly superior personal and material benefits of freedom? Would a man whose high income depended on the life production of another man or woman whom he had raised from babyhood or bought at a high price not increase that productivity as far as possible by training, by careful attention to healthy feeding and sickness care, and by fitting young and old into jobs they could

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handle despite youthful inexperience or aged decrepitude and senility? Would he maintain discipline by wanton torture endangering life and performance? or would he rather attempt to minimise punishment and its effects on discipline and productivity by offering rewards to willing workers instead? (Ask any schoolmaster about his views on punishment.) Specifically, would he encourage promiscuity and practise it himself at a time when indiscriminate sex meant a high risk of venereal disease and a neglect of children, in an organisation where profitability depended on disciplined hard work by steady and reliable workers bossed for the most part by other slaves? (Ask any business executive—or university lecturer—the attitude of his organisation towards indiscriminate copulation with junior members, secretarial staff, and students. It takes a non-profit-earning bureaucracy to develop the "liaison" as a regular exchange of sexual gratification for personal promotion).

And if the answer is still thought likely to be affirmative, consider the following questions. Why should a large plantation owner (50 or more slaves) with an income equivalent in modern terms to £100,000 after tax, prefer the company of simple slave girls to the fancy ladies always available at a safe distance from home ground to the presentable rich? And if the answer to that is the overwhelming sexual attractiveness of the black model of standard biological equipment, how is it that only 4·3% of Nashville prostitutes in 1860 were Negresses, and all of these free (non-slave) and light in skin colour? Negresses earned no sexual proficiency bonus at prostitution, and the return was too low to command a supply from slave owners.

If the facts differ from the traditional view, and also make economic sense where the traditional view does not, how did the traditional view gain majority credence? Part of the answer is inadequate and biased reporting, and grossly incompetent handling of statistics. Frederick Lew Olmsted, the most reputable classic source of the traditional view, timed his visits to the South to coincide with the slack season between plantings, when all farmers traditionally rest up by doing light repair and maintenance work. Hinton Rowan Helper, who won political fame with his contention that slavery retarded the economic growth of the South, grossly mishandled the data even by the standards of his time, let alone by the standards of national income and growth analysis now familiar to all undergraduates in economics. But the fundamental answer (in the authors' view) is that both abolitionists and defenders of slavery were agreed on the social inferiority of the Negro. Whether slavery made the worst or the best of a bad job, it was agreed to be a *bad job* and destined to remain so, at least within the calculable future. So all evidence to the contrary was swept into the litter-bin of unusual exceptions—whether exceptions were due to the ability of a few Negroes or of a few efficient white masters was really a secondary question, though the one that the political process was concerned with. The result of this religious and intellectual tradition (as the authors point out) was to rob the contemporary Negro of the true cultural heritage of his race. Either he had become (through no fault of his own) incompetent to cope with industrial society, or his success in competing made him a despicable "Uncle Tom."

Nevertheless, in spite of its material accomplishments, slavery had its human price. That price was coercion and, if necessary, punishment. The authors are always careful to distinguish the material from the psychic welfare of the slaves. Where the critics of the traditional view erred was in failing to distinguish the optimal combination of use of material rewards and coercion, from the maximisation of coercion and minimisation of the standard of living of the slaves that they assumed. Coercion was necessary to achieve efficiency in large-scale plantation agriculture; and it subsequently proved impossible to bribe free men sufficiently handsomely to accept the discipline required to permit such plantation agriculture to remain profitable in a free labour market. Moreover, as is almost invariably the case in such situations of labour exploitation, it is the *consumer* of the product and not the capitalist who enjoys the main part of the benefit of artificially cheap labour, though the capitalist gets all the blame; also, the loss to the labourer is a multiple of the gain to the beneficiaries (the authors estimate a factor of three in the case of cotton).

THE BOOK, as I have already mentioned, is a joy to read and of interest well beyond its historical subject. Indirectly it calls up memory of Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1944), and the work of R. H. Tawney and Max Weber on the Protestant Ethic. It is a great irony that a concept of freedom derived from religion should have become the rationale for turning over to the mercies of the market men who were not equipped to deal with the cold calculating processes of capitalism, and particularly the management of "human capital", which is one of the longest lived and in some ways least flexible form of industrial capital. And the religious syndrome, not the narrow self-interest of capitalists, was fundamentally to blame. More directly, it is a warning against the power of propaganda, and specifically of apparently "scientific" propaganda

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of the type embodied in 18th-century racial views and conversely in modern views that deny any significance to cultural, historical, and social differences as determinants of the social performances of groups in society. Most directly, it exemplifies how scientific studies in the social sciences should be done—on the basic assumption that human behaviour is rational, once one properly understands the constraints imposed on it by its natural and social environment.

Karl Kraus & a Period-Piece Love

By George Steiner

THE SCENARIO was banal. Karl Kraus, then 39, was introduced to Sidonie Nádherný on 8 September 1913. The aristocratic young woman, not quite 25, had just lost her older brother, the head of the family, under painful circumstances. She felt herself to be in a "desert of the heart."

Kraus's infatuation was immediate and overwhelming. The family seat of the Nádhernýs, the château Janowitz near Prague, became his Eden, the magic pivot in a world gone psychologically and politically lunatic. Such was the vehemence of Kraus's adoration, such the force of his presence, that Sidonie not only accepted him as lover, but contemplated marriage. Rilke, whom the baroness had first met in Rodin's studio during a visit to Meudon in 1906, followed developments with feline anxiety. On 21 February 1914 he wrote a masterful letter to Sidonie. It applauds Karl Kraus's gifts as a publicist and moralist. It does not mention the word "Jew." But the import is clear: a baroness Nádherný von Borutin cannot overlook "the final, ineradicable difference" between her own condition, her race, and that of the editor of the *Fackel*. Had she not herself, as a young girl, written in an album, opposite the query "your most deeply-rooted aversion", the word "Jews"?

Kraus knew nothing of Rilke's intervention. He accepted the status of lover, occasional travelling companion, worshipper. Together with Sidonie's brother Karl, Kraus accompanied his beloved to Italy and Switzerland. He stayed at Janowitz whenever possible. He accepted the baroness's abortive engagement to an Italian aristocrat in 1915. He endured her marriage to Count Max Thun in April 1920. By September the couple had broken up. Returning to Kraus on the first of January 1921, Sidonie noted in her journal: "Destroyed all dreams, destroyed that strange mysterious love, that bound me to M.T." After which the baroness's rage for travel, emotional turnabouts, and spells of void sadness grew worse. There had been a break between her and Kraus from the end of 1918 until a meeting in Prague in June 1920. In December 1923, they again split apart. The reconciliation followed on 1 September 1927. The relation had now gentled into a calmer, indispensable friendship. On 15/16 May 1936, Kraus wrote to Sidonie: "The stupidity of the world (*die Weltdummheit*) makes it impossible to work on anything but Shakespeare."

The writer died in June. Sidonie was desolate. She set down a private epilogue:

> "Despite my errors, two souls had never stood closer to one another, there has never been a truer understanding, never a friendship more holy, never a higher love, measureless from year to year, deepened by pain, only severed by death. . . . My remorse is boundless as is his forgiveness."

BETWEEN September 1913 and May 1936, Karl Kraus addressed 1072 letters, postcards, and telegrams to Sidonie Nádherný. It was not until 1947 that the baroness, then still residing at Janowitz, gave any clue as to the existence of this trove. A year later the 64-year-old woman fled to London. She died, a proud, uncomplaining exile, in September 1950.

It was known that she had made copies of the Kraus material, in part at least. The originals had been left to a friend. They came to light, intact and chronologically ordered, in 1967. (The late Michael Lazarus, originally in charge of edition and publication,[1] does not tell us how or where.) Sidonie's journals for some of the crucial years of the affair have survived. But not a single one of her own letters and messages to Kraus has yet surfaced. Lazarus hints that she may have destroyed them. But his remark is ambiguous, and Sidonie's posthumous statement that there is no objection to a publication of the correspondence does suggest that the archive exists, somewhere. As it now stands, the record is totally one-sided.

Stylistically, this massive correspondence (issued together with a second volume of bio-

[1] *Karl Kraus: Briefe an Sidonie Nádherný von Borutin.* Edited by HEINRICH FISCHER and MICHAEL LAZARUS. 2 vols. Kösel-Verlag, Munich, DM 150

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graphical and textual annotations) is no great find. A very large part of the letters, telegrams, and cards is concerned with the trivia, so often hysterical and obsessive, of a liaison. Kraus writes twice, sometimes three times within twenty-four hours, pleading for instant reply, voicing wild anxiety over the slightest hint of the lady's indispositions, evasions, or domestic imbroglios. Telegram follows on telegram in a crescendo of anguish. Then Sidonie's letter or cable arrives and the world is at one with God.

Between 1914 and 1936, Kraus gives 622 public readings from his own works, from the European poets, from Shakespeare, Nestroy, and Offenbach. These performances, which constitute his major impact on the public at large, take him throughout Austria, and to Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland. Whenever, wherever possible, the beloved is in the audience (the aisle-seat in the second row). Cards and telegrams pour in on Janowitz to arrange for Sidonie's attendance, to keep her informed of Kraus's peregrinations. How is Bobby, the cherished dog? What of May-May (Miss Cooney who was the baroness's life-long *dame de compagnie*)? What of Charley, Baron Karl Nádherný, on whom the ardent Kraus lavishes time and interest, though he appears to have been a melancholy bore? Kraus's genius for direct address went into the *Fackel*, into his poems, into the lectures and recitations whose legend echoes still. There are very few love-letters in this collection which are in any sense a major utterance: that of 9 October 1916, certainly, and the *unsent* letter of 21/22 May 1924 in which Kraus bitterly reproaches Sidonie for having forgotten his fiftieth birthday. Passion can make a laundry-list sing; but the effect remains private.

NOR DOES ONE GET a very impressive sense of "Sidi." Her diary entries, in governess's English, are often banal to a degree:

"I want new people, new experiences, new countries, freedom . . . . K. K., I wish he'd love me less, for in my heart are other dreams, & faithful I cannot be & no man should want that of a woman, for it must make her fade."

Or: "now I am sitting after supper in the Hotel Sacher, and trying to telephone with K.K. He is a great load on my life." Her *Wanderlust* verged on neurosis. By 1922 she confesses to having "only one wish, one longing and I think of nothing else: to travel into foreign lands." A year later she was hurrying through Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Greece. She distrusted Rilke's insinuating intimacies; she refused to have his daughter thrust upon her as a permanent guest; she knew of his compulsive snobbery. But when he died (in December 1926), Sidonie noted: "My first real friend, my friend since 20 years, he is no more! . . . I have none more. He was the only man, whose friendship was pure and brotherly." It is obvious that Kraus had roused an intense physical response in her (a number of his letters hint at this fact with anxious ecstasy). But the journals and photographs suggest an essentially solitary, Narcissistic being, prone to emptiness. It is long after Kraus's death, under the pressures of wartime and of exile, that the Baroness von Borutin seems to have come fully into her own.

What, then, is the benefit of this monumental publication?

THERE WAS in Kraus the satirist, the polemicist, the publicist obsessed with the journalistic-political trivia of the moment, a lyric poet. We now know—and this correspondence allows us to detail our knowledge—that Kraus's verse and the Shakespeare translations which were so central to his later years are a direct, persistent response to the beloved. Sidonie's name is inwoven in many of the principal lyrics. Again and again, the poems are coded messages to Janowitz, notations of passionate encounters, cries of longing. Without "Sidi", moreover, it may be that Kraus would neither have conceived nor brought to completion his masterpiece, the epic drama on the First World War: *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit.*

This colossus, each "act" being of the length of an ordinary play, represents the fusion of Kraus's divided gifts. In it the poet and the satirist, the apocalyptic visionary and the reporter are joined. (That this work of genius, probably the most telling literary act to come of the

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1914–18 catastrophe, should be virtually unknown in the English-speaking world is more than an accident. It points to a critical dissociation of literacy and feeling.) Devised at the height of his passion, written, in part, during retreats together in the mountain fastness of Thierfehd, Kraus's *Last Days of Mankind* is a tribute to Sidonie Nádherný.

The mechanism was one of counterpoint. Kraus could unleash his rage and energies on the muck of daily political-social life in the decaying Dual Monarchy because he kept intact and secret the private truth of his being. His relation to Sidonie, the tranquil garden at Janowitz, the journeys together into mountains and forests, held Kraus in balance. They were, as he says in many letters, the wall of sanity. From the tension between the all-too-public *persona* and the deeply private lover came the urgency of the work. The analogy with Swift and Stella lies at hand, and Kraus himself invokes it.

There is, as well, a mundane profit to be gained from reading these letters. They constitute a vivid period-piece, a series of vignettes from the *belle époque*. The dilemmas of adultery in privileged circles were those posed by the possible indiscretions of domestic servants, hoteliers, regal conductors on *wagons-lits*. But where baronial titles and bank-notes are forthcoming, such trifling obstacles as closed frontiers and world war can be overcome. St Moritz, the Dolomites, the Adriatic coast can be reached. Despite fuel shortages and the military conscription of motor vehicles, the new Opel (automobiles and airplanes fascinated Kraus) is available for a long jaunt in the summer of 1915. One may, in one's public writings and utterances, be a ferocious rationalist, contemptuous of human lies and illusions. But one is privately, and almost obsessively, involved with a graphologist and clairvoyant whose interpretations of Sidonie's hand-writing and of the hand-writing and horoscopes of her friends seem "miraculously accurate" and fill numerous letters.

One is deeply flattered, if mildly uncomfortable, by involvement in the aristocracy. The names which crowd the annotations to these letters verge on the implausible: Prinz Maria Erwein Karl Petrus von Alcantara Romanus Damianus Balthasar Lobkowitz; Caroline Maria Ferdinandea Ludovika Huberta Baronin Malowetz von Malowitz und Kosor; Fürstin Marie, *geb.* Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst; Gabrielle Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein; Graf Zdenko von Kolowrat-Krakowský-Liebsteinský; Johann Nepomuk Franz Mladota von Solopisk. The names roll on, heraldic, feudal, absurd. An *Almanach de Gotha* plus *The Merry Widow*. Yet it is difficult to believe that Kraus was indifferent to this element in his liaison or that he did not feel caressed by the discreet presence in his and Sidonie's clandestine affairs of such high ladies as the Baroness Mladota, the Countess Dobrzensky, or Mechtilde Lichnowsky.

THE PHENOMENON is more intricate than snobbery. It involves the interaction, at once ironic and nostalgic, between literature and aristocratic patronage in the closing decades of the old European order. Where Jews or half-Jews such as Karl Kraus and Marcel Proust were concerned, this odd contiguity had a dual role. It gave the creative outsider access to traditional values, to a dense historicity of tone and style otherwise inaccessible. And it allowed a contrastive exploration of what were, in actual fact, two ghettos. For despite its external panache and vestigial prosperity, the aristocracy was itself increasingly isolated from the main pulse of social life, and was itself retreating into a sphere of inactivity and antiquarian spleen. There was more in common between the marginal status of a Karl Kraus and that of a Baroness von Borutin than Rilke would allow.

IN THIS CENTENNIAL YEAR, a fair amount of repentant rhetoric is being poured out about Kraus, notably in Vienna. But although the *Fackel* and the complete works are being republished with lavish scruple, and although biographical material is now largely available, Kraus remains an opaque, contradictory presence. The scourge of God in respect of other men's grammar, he could, himself, turn out turgid, idiosyncratic stuff. His politics were an amalgam of ethical radicalism and stoic conservatism whose contradictory, often histrionic character hardly makes sense outside the Austrian context. The impact of his lectures and dramatic recitations—his famous "Theatre of Poetry"—is irremediably lost. His diagnosis of the crisis of political language came long before George Orwell's, and is of a far greater philosophic penetration. But Orwell translates into societies other than his own as Karl Kraus does not. These letters show that Kraus was more vulnerable, more painfully conscious of his own asymmetries than he had allowed the public world to suspect. Yet intimate as they are, they leave the man as secret as before.

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A Special Book Section

Stage & Screen

Freedoms of the City

Plays & Playwrights—By JOHN SPURLING

TWENTY YEARS AGO, in a Britain which had still to pass through its Suez, Kenneth Tynan drew attention to the lack of English playwrights, not only new but old, as far back as the 17th century. The cause he saw as the loss of "high colloquial speech", itself the outcome of our language being "pelted with imports" during the century which began with Shakespeare's birth. He concluded that "the sudden onslaught of a million immigrants of mixed nationalities might help. Until then, I propose an agonising reappraisal of our theatrical status, which is now that of a showroom for foreign goods." Almost as he wrote, the four salvoes which were to set off the English Theatre Reformation were being prepared. That same year, 1955, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* made its English début at the Arts Theatre; in the following year the Berliner Ensemble brought Brecht to the Palace Theatre, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* opened at the Royal Court and Behan's *The Quare Fellow* at Stratford East. Only Osborne's salvo was native English, while Behan's piece in itself was less a salvo than an answering rifle-shot, earnest of stronger things to come—above all *Oh, What a Lovely War*—from Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop.

Two newly published books bring back those brave days and offer a basis for assessing what has happened since. Andrew K. Kennedy's stimulating and closely argued examination of modern dramatic language[1] deals with Shaw, Eliot, Beckett, Osborne, Pinter and Arden in detail. Concentrating as it does on language it perhaps invites a too literary judgment of work which depends also on structure and—more than any other art form—on the prevailing social climate of the time; but, by the same token, the theatre is too often a mere excuse for superficial generalisation and can only gain from this sort of proper particularity. Arnold P. Hinchliffe's new book[2] is valuable for its clear setting-out of facts; he deals with the whole movement of the English Theatre Reformation almost in orchestral terms, as a good music-teacher might pick out the principal incidents in a symphony. His first chapter on European influences is especially useful, but the book becomes less praiseworthy as it goes on and its author grows more opinionated. He is curiously hostile, for instance, to Stoppard and Hampton, curiously impressed by Storey's *Home*. To another eye it might seem that Stoppard's and Hampton's successes were no more signs "of the desperation of the critics" than Storey's, that all three were bland, but none by any means negligible; however, Hinchliffe reserves his chief scorn for anything he sniffs out as "cerebral." His view that the Reformation has been gradually running down since its brave beginning and that the thing had virtually petered out by 1970 seems to emerge simply from a narrow personal taste; and as for his chief villain in this tale of decline, something called "Producer's Theatre", there are really no grounds for saying that producers are more powerful now than they were 20 years ago, or that—except in a few particular shows such as *US* (1967)—they have usurped the pre-eminence of the playwright's texts.

WE MAY PICK CRITICAL HOLES in any or all of the mass of new English plays which have been written and performed since 1956, but we should not now be in any doubt of the general outcome: saving Shakespeare (and all arguments must save him if they are not to be devoted to him) we have matched any of our other great dramatic periods in energy and quality and surpassed them in quantity and variety. This did not come about quite as Tynan expected. True, the problem for the pre-1956 playwrights had been partly that of a dead language: how to discover and dramatise

[1] *Six Dramatists in Search of a Language*. By ANDREW K. KENNEDY. Cambridge University Press, £5, paper £2.

[2] *British Theatre 1950–70*. By ARNOLD P. HINCHLIFFE. Basil Blackwell, £3.50.

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realities (whether social, political, psychological or even metaphysical) in speech patterns adapted for and inextricably associated with mainly upper-class domestic comedy or farce. Andrew K. Kennedy's approach to Shaw and Eliot is most helpful here. He finds Shaw hardly aware of the problem at all, using rhetoric, parody, pastiche, vague notions of Ibsen and Chekhov with little conscious control:

> The energy put into dramatising what were intended to be "Twentieth Century Creeds" left him, as a dramatist, essentially parasitical on certain worn-out nineteenth-century conventions (romance, melodrama, farce) both in the structure and in the language of his plays.

Shaw ought, indeed, to be, for all playwrights that come after him, a grim lighthouse over the dangers of oratory, over-explanation, logorrhea and unselfconsciousness.

Eliot, on the other hand, was sharply and consistently self-conscious. As Kennedy points out, "the problems of language in modern drama were crystallised—as problems—in the early dramatic criticism of Eliot (from 1919 onwards)." When he came to write plays himself "each play in succession is, among other things, a conscious choice from consciously stored possibilities." But in the four plays that followed the first bold experiments of *Sweeney Agonistes* and *Murder in the Cathedral* "we see the struggle to find the intersection between liturgy and approximate naturalism, between speech out-of-time (the musical order and the unsayable) and the speech of our time (the dialect of the tribe)." Unfortunately "the dialect of the tribe" in the shape of the shallow, stuffy small-talk with built-in winks at the audience which was so normal on the stage as to appear to be directly imitating the only "normal" conversation off it, remained apparently impregnable, stifling or worse still mocking the pretensions of "the musical order" or "the unsayable." Where the mighty Eliot, who had already done for poetry what he could not do for drama, failed, it was not likely that Christopher Fry or John Whiting would succeed.

The problem of course went well beyond language, involving first the dramatic arena (the persons, the setting and the situation of the play) and beyond that again the relationship of the play to its audience, the view shared by both playwright and public of the world mirrored by the play. In other words, the impregnability of the "dead language" was guaranteed by the conservatism of the whole experience: a narrow outlook giving rise to a narrow slice of life in a narrow choice of settings with a narrow choice of situations and outcomes facing a narrow set of persons, who naturally spoke in a narrow

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language expressive of a narrow outlook and so on. Any number of Tynan's mixed immigrants would have made no change at all unless they had themselves packed into the theatre and stayed to jeer or else changed the way of life, outside the theatre, of the majority of regular theatregoers.

THE THING WAS DONE, the city of "deadly theatre" taken and destroyed, from within, by aliens inside the walls. Osborne is rightly given the credit for the rallying-cry, but he was quickly joined by contingents chiefly from the Royal Court, Stratford East and the Arts Theatre who broke the dead language almost casually, not by the conscious and sustained effort of an Eliot, not even with the revolutionary theories of an Artaud, but by simply holding up a mirror to their own different world, their different preoccupations, their different setting. By themselves they might have gone little further than to set up a new dead language of the kitchen instead of the drawing-room, but their insurrection coincided with the arrival at the city-gates of the two major playwrights of the century, Beckett and Brecht.

It is instructive, as Kennedy demonstrates, to compare Beckett with Eliot:

> while Eliot was teaching himself the discipline of writing verse dialogue in and for character in a quasi-naturalist convention, Beckett created a new form of poetic drama which drew, among other sources, on the radical aims of modernist art Eliot had once shared.

Eliot made the fatal mistake of trying to join the theatre as he found it. Beckett took all its elements, dead language, blinkered outlook, stereotyped relationships, artificial structure and tricked them into fighting one another to death. His most obvious stratagem, in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, was to dwell on the fact that everyone in the theatre was only waiting to get out of it again, but by one means or another he reversed Eliot's process and made "the musical order" and "the unsayable" swallow "the dialect of the tribe." Unlike the lesser "modernists" or so-called "absurdists" whose work was little more than a direct parody of domestic comedy and has not therefore survived the demise of what it fed on, Beckett's demolition was so radical as to entail a fresh start: forward movement became *stasis* or cyclic recurrence, dialogue became monologue, rhetoric became abstract rhythm, dead language became a new poetry of cliché.

Above all, Beckett reopened the subjective possibilities of the theatre. After him characters could again be made to speak into themselves to the limit of their authors' emotional and psychological understanding instead of merely to the limit of what an audience might consider proper to a person sitting on a sofa with a drink in one hand. Meanwhile Brecht restored the theatre's objective scope together with its simplicity of means. After him the barest stage could again accommodate geography and history with an ease which made even the cinema look clumsy as well as false. Whatever the limitations of each of these two playwrights separately—including of course the fact that they did not borrow from one another—the range they offer in combination to their successors seems almost limitless: it is as if the theatre were newly invented.

Osborne's local insurrection, then, was accompanied and soon far outweighed in importance by the spreading influence of these two powerful figures. Pinter's closest ancestors are no doubt, as Hinchliffe observes, Wilde and Coward, but Beckett showed him how to turn them into Pinter. Arden's work may be, as Kennedy sees it, "a literary attempt to create a language that has seemingly pre-literary qualities—'primary colours', a tough lyricism, a popular poetry-in-the-theatre", but only because "Arden is a critically conscious post-Brechtian dramatist. . . . Brecht himself was not so much a direct influence as a mediator, making it easier for Arden to go back to sources he was naturally drawn to." Indeed Osborne himself, Wesker, and others of the native irregulars who emerged on their own terms have increasingly floundered for lack of any weighty influences behind them. Osborne in particular has made many gallant attempts to expand his own range, but has so far always found himself forced back on to what Kennedy calls his "intuitive" point of departure: "filling the old naturalistic form with the new wine of a highly theatrical and ego-charged rhetoric." His thankless task seems merely to have been to open the gates of the city to all comers but himself.

NOT THAT THE REFORMATION has moved very far from Osborne's old naturalistic form yet. The more recent playwrights have tended to use their new theatrical freedom with great caution, borrowing bits and pieces of technique for specific purposes rather than pressing on into new forms. Peter Nichols's *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* (1967) had the characters directly addressing the audience so as to streamline the presentation and give a hearty music-hall humour to a gloomy subject, but the basis of its considerable appeal for audiences was that it dealt in straightforward naturalistic terms with a topical problem—what is it like to have a spastic child? His second play, *The National Health* (1969), counterpointed the fantasy naturalism of television soap-operas about hospitals with the "straight" naturalism of a "real" hospital. In *Chez Nous* (1974)[3] he seems

[3] *Chez Nous*. By PETER NICHOLS. Faber and Faber, £2.00, paper 95p.

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to have fallen back completely on the old domestic comedy routine, using language ostensibly directed from one character to another, but actually turned outwards to amuse the audience. In his latest play, *The Freeway*, he models himself unprepossessingly on Shaw. Hinchliffe might well feel depressed about the outcome of the Reformation if he had only Nichols's development before his eyes.

David Mercer, whom Hinchliffe seems to admire, has scarcely strayed from the well-known paths of naturalism. His latest play *Duck Song* (1974)[4] suggests desperation: its first act is pure domestic comedy of the most banal kind, while its second act, refusing to meet any of the cheques drawn in the first, takes refuge in a series of unexplained and inexplicable (except in theatrical terms) events such as the disappearance of the scenery and the death of a character who later gets to her feet again. Perhaps Mercer is trying at last to turn and rend his dead language, or perhaps he is rather belatedly satirising absurdism, but the result certainly looks like a swansong in the feathers of a dead duck.

These two playwrights are for the moment casualties of the same kind as Osborne. Peter Shaffer, on the other hand, who began, with *Five Finger Exercise* (1958), very much in the pre-1956 style and later borrowed rather superficially from Brecht for *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), has suddenly come into his own with *Equus* (1973).[5] The play is still naturalistic but it moves with impressive suppleness from past to present, reality to dream, narration to dialogue and at moments even into choric frenzy, with actors wearing the stylised masks of horses. It is clear that Shaffer's earlier rather unremarkable versions of psychological drama (though including the clever firework *Black Comedy* (1965)) were stages in a slow movement towards his real area of interest, a modern use of myth. *The Battle of Shrivings*, which seemed such an artistic disaster when it was performed in 1970 and which scarcely seems to be much improved in its rewritten version *Shrivings*,[6] can now perhaps be seen as Shaffer's *adieu* to unmodified naturalism. *Equus* teaches us to call no playwright predictable until he is dead.

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON'S *Savages* (1973)[7] is an equally surprising and inspiriting development

[4] *Duck Song*. By DAVID MERCER. Eyre Methuen, £2.00, paper 75p.
[5] *Equus*. By PETER SHAFFER. André Deutsch, £1.95.
[6] *Shrivings*. By PETER SHAFFER. André Deutsch, £2.25.
[7] *Savages*. By CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON. Faber and Faber, £1.95, paper 80p.

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for a hitherto largely unredeemed practitioner in the school of Rattigan. Its success, like that of *Equus*, depends on the ease and conviction with which it shifts from a straightforward naturalistically-treated story—that of an English diplomat kidnapped by Brazilian guerrilleros—to the more obliquely-told story of a massacre of Brazilian Indians and from that to stylised versions of the myths and ritual of the Indians. One senses a passionate urgency in the telling of both *Equus* and *Savages* which perhaps helps to hold the various stylistic elements together, but this is only half the truth, for it is the working of the different elements on one another which conveys the sense of passionate urgency. There is no better example of the same point than the South African playwright Athol Fugard's trilogy *Statements* (1972–4).[8] The first two plays were arrived at on a basis of improvisation with their actors, John Kani and Winston Ntshona. This is certainly naturalism, underpinned like *Savages* and *Equus* by the shocking real-life origin of what one sees on stage, but it is also theatricalised both in its use of enriched language and in its structure—stories within stories. There can be little question that it is Fugard's and his actors' idiosyncratic distortions of shocking facts from real-life South African society that give them a freshly shocking reality for English audiences.

The new theatrical freedom of course has its dangers. Peter Barnes is an enthusiastic anti-naturalist with an admiration for Ben Jonson and a delight in baroque verbiage. In his new play *The Bewitched* (1974)[9] he takes a historical subject—the decay of Spain under its last Hapsburg monarch, the near-idiot Carlos II—which is fascinating in itself and perhaps even in some way relevant to our own predicament, but effectively smothers it under a vast heap of stylistic feathers. The lesson is not that Barnes strays too far from naturalism, for he does not, in spite of his pastiche language, but that like Shaw he cannot allow audiences to approach the play at any point on their own terms, and constantly shouts down their curiosity with his shrill "I'm telling you." Like Mercer's *Duck Song* and Shaffer's *Shrivings* this play strives too hard to be significant; it gives out a feeling of strain, which is, as one might expect, a fairly constant presence in the work of these middle generation writers, men as it were liberated but still remembering their shackles.

THE NEW GENERATION of playwrights—not all of them much younger than Barnes and hardly one of them younger than Hampton—may seem less ambitious than their predecessors, but they are also refreshingly more relaxed. Their plays are mostly either directly political like Trevor Griffiths's *Occupations* (1970)[10] and *The Party* (1973)[11] and Howard Brenton's *Magnificence* (1973)[12] and *The Churchill Play* (1974)[13] or political by implication, satirising the corruption of contemporary capitalist society as in David Hare's *Knuckle* (1974),[14] Brenton's and Hare's *Brassneck* (1973)[15] and Snoo Wilson's *The Pleasure Principle* (1973).[16] Their simplicity of aim, the fact that they are not trying to set up mirrors of human behaviour for all time but only to cope with relatively temporary issues, goes with an engagingly cavalier attitude towards the theatrical means at their disposal. They seem to stride rapidly from play to play like golfers with well-stocked trolleys of clubs, an iron along the fairway, a niblick out of the bunker, a putter down the hole and "how long's the next one?" Two of the plays I have mentioned stand out from the rest. *The Party* is chiefly interesting for its bold use of very long political arguments delivered quite straight, without the sugary paradoxes Shaw thought necessary. The speeches are more carefully designed than may at first appear and they assume an adult capacity for serious thought in the audience which if justified promises well for the future of the English theatre. *The Churchill Play* is a powerful transference of what is happening in Northern Ireland now to what might be happening in England in ten years' time. Its swift dialogue in a masterful variety of dialects masks a cunning battery of cross-fire, a play about the immediate past is performed within the play, as an implicit criticism of our disregard for present events is contained within a warning of future events we could not so easily disregard. This is a controlled and sophisticated play, a marked advance on Brenton's previously patchy work.

KENNEDY REMARKS that "the method of revitalising the language of drama through the use of

[8] *Statements*. By ATHOL FUGARD with John Kani and Winston Ntshona. Oxford University Press, £2.95, paper 92p.
[9] *The Bewitched*. By PETER BARNES. Heinemann Educational, £3.00, paper £1.50.
[10] *Occupations and The Big House*. By TREVOR GRIFFITHS. Calder & Boyars, £2.50.
[11] *The Party*. By TREVOR GRIFFITHS. Faber and Faber, £2.00, paper 95p.
[12] *Magnificence*. By HOWARD BRENTON. Eyre Metheun, 95p.
[13] *The Churchill Play*. By HOWARD BRENTON. Eyre Methuen, £2.25, paper 95p.
[14] *Knuckle*. By DAVID HARE. Faber and Faber, £1.15.
[15] *Brassneck*. By HOWARD BRENTON and DAVID HARE. Eyre Methuen, £2.25, paper £1
[16] *The Pleasure Principle*. By SNOO WILSON. Eyre Methuen, £2.50, paper 95p.

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this or that stock language seems to free the dramatist from the burden of having to 'invent' a language." This, it seems likely, is the method the playwrights of the English Theatre Reformation are now adopting. In addition they can draw at will on a stock of dramatic structures, but perhaps most importantly of all they are now offered a large prospect of fresh experience as the old society which guaranteed the impregnability of domestic comedy begins to break up in good earnest. Let us hope that so many freedoms don't overwhelm them.

A Space for Shakespeare

Theatre in Britain—By BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

STEPHEN JOSEPH is a loss. He pioneered theatre-in-the-round in this country, at Stoke and Scarborough, and was always thinking of new ways to make the drama accessible and exciting. When I last saw him, not long before his death in 1967, he had plans for a "fish-and-chip" theatre in Leeds. The patrons were to pick up their food and beer in the foyer and stroll around a balcony consuming them, while performers toiled below. It never happened, of course. Instead, expensive and relatively conventional auditoria sprouted like concrete fungi everywhere from Newcastle to Sheffield, Leeds to London—a development about which Joseph himself had considerable doubts, knowing, as he did, that lively theatre could occur in church halls, attics, streets, basements, or wherever two or three gathered to perform and four or five to watch. No less than two recent books remind us of the answer he gave when, at some high-powered conference, he was asked as an expert what was the most important thing the architects should bear in mind when designing the new National Theatre. He got up, looking grave. "The most important thing," he said, "is to make it inflammable, so that by the time they realise they've made a mess of the building, it will have burned down and they can start again."

Time has converted others to arson, too. In interview with the tireless Ronald Hayman,[1] Peter Brook casually hopes that "someone will set fire for a second time to the Stratford-on-Avon theatre and it will be rebuilt." And some would find the second half of his sentence conservative: why rebuild at all? It is a curious irony that, just at the moment a network of new repertory theatres is almost complete, people are asking if it was necessary in the first place. Sometimes the reason for scepticism is that a particular building was designed by an architect with more experience of supermarkets than theatres. But in other cases the anxiety goes further: nowhere more so, of course, than in that of the new National.

Sheridan Morley's *Theatre'74*[2] contains, among other useful things, an essay on the company's last year at the Old Vic, an upbeat interview with its new director, Peter Hall, and "an architectural look at the new South Bank complex." Here, as the world now knows, there are no less than three auditoria; and, as it doesn't know so well, the Lyttleton has an 80-foot fly-tower, "really silent air-conditioning" and a five-section stage that can "rise, fall or rake", and the Olivier has a stage consisting of "a drum going down 45 feet in which are built two independent, semi-circular lifts with a sliding lid to cover one or other of them." The scenery entrance "can take two 40-foot lorries side by side." There are also "VIP reception rooms with their own washrooms", from which lorry-drivers will presumably be excluded, however long their vehicles. It is, as Hall has said, a small city. But who will visit it, and what will they see? Audiences as select as Ronald Hayman's *The Set-Up*[3] shows them to have been at the Old Vic? Productions as unexciting as, on the whole, they've been obliged to endure over the past year?

THE SUBJECT of "popular" drama is one I don't propose to tussle with here. But there's a for-

[1] *Playback*. (By RONALD HAYMAN. Davis-Poynter, £2.50) is a collection of interviews with various theatre notables, including Anouilh, Gielgud and Olivier.

[2] *Theatre 74*. Edited by SHERIDAN MORLEY. Hutchinson, £4.50.

[3] *The Set-Up* (By RONALD HAYMAN. Eyre Methuen, £4) is a richly detailed and helpful investigation of the structure and working of the British theatre today.

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mality, a hotel-lounge respectability about many of our new theatres that tacitly proclaims them to be the conserve of one class-bracket alone. Will Mr Hall manage to make the National as national as he promises in *Directors' Theatre*[4] in an interview with Judith Cook?

> An alive theatre has an audience drawn from the whole of society. An exclusive social class, whether upper or lower, young or old, makes for a bad audience. A static audience has the potential to transfer its immobility to the product itself. [The National Theatre] must be a place for the community, meaning London in the small sense and the nation in the broad sense.

Or will the building end by mastering him, by limiting the character of the audience, the nature of the plays and, not least, the style of the acting? Will grandeur subtly promote grandiloquence, or, to put it more cautiously, will the relative orthodoxy of the main stages and auditoria mean that relatively orthodox performances occur on them? It is a question frequently raised by Peter Hall's own literary manager, John Russell Brown, as he harks back nostalgically to the simplicity and informality of the Elizabethan era. "Our theatre buildings," he argues, "like our production methods, actor-training and audience expectations, work against the free and explorative performances [many] plays naturally require."

OF COURSE, Peter Hall created the Royal Shakespeare Company. We have the word of Ronald Eyre, talking to Judith Cook, that directing in the "curiously deformed barn" in Stratford is "like having people shriek Mozart up a wind tunnel." Yet, here and at the Aldwych, Hall evolved a style of performance that still seems to me rather more alert, vivid and direct, than that customarily to be found at the Old Vic. Please excuse the vagueness of the hurrah-words. The style is hard to define, though several attempts are quoted in David Addenbrooke's trenchant, readable study of the RSC's brief history[5]:

> cool, intellectual, rather formed, rather witty, concentrating more on meaning than emotion . . . the Hovercraft to the National's Rolls Royce—the National mounting beautifully engineered productions, the RSC trying to find a new means of locomotion altogether . . . an experience that reverberates with the thoughts and feelings of today. . . .

and so on.

In *The Set-Up*, Hayman calls the company style "anti-authoritarian, anti-heroic, anti-illusionist." There were to be no assaults on either ear or eye: no promotion of "stars" in Hall's kingdom, no making of theatrical "points",[6] no heavenly orchestras or stately processions. Each performance, each visual event was to be given no more or less weight than the overall conception demanded, and that conception was to have some relevance, implicit or explicit, to the society of the 1960s or 1970s, seen from a liberal, leftish point of view. And so, on the whole, it has worked out. But it does not follow that, because the RSC's performers concentrated on meaning rather than "word-music", they refused to acknowledge that Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote in verse. Quite the contrary. The company remains as suspicious of "naturalistic crap" (Mr Hall's canard) as of stilted vocal effects; and one has only to see some of their better productions—Barton's *Troilus and Cressida*, say, or Nunn's *Revenger's Tragedy*—to see that this is no inconsistency or contradiction.

"I think that the Stratford style is the realisation that there is a rhythm to each speech and each play—find it!" So Hall told Addenbrooke; and his successors, too, encourage the actors to deduce their intellectual and emotional motivation from the character and movement of the verse, and then to make the audience feel that the verse is the inevitable expression of those thoughts and feelings, however complex. It is a circular process, which those involved don't find easy to explain. Terry Hands, interviewed in *Playback*, does try to give some concrete examples, though even he is full of tantalisingly imprecise phrases, like "put the language first, then seek to support it" or "apprehend the thought, then feel it, then *want* to speak it." But from this and other sources a general picture of the ideal RSC actor takes shape: studious, sentient, flexible, self-effacing; ready to join seminars and classes, at which he'll be expected to discuss the plays or whet his skills on the sonnets; a man with the mental equipment to write a small thesis on the part he's playing, the vocal and physical ability to play it interestingly, and the dedication and loyalty not to mind if it is, in fact, a Third Citizen or Second Messenger.

THIS SCHOOL (as it literally seems to be) has produced many notable performances: recently, John Wood's ironic, ravelled Brutus, as intellectually ambitious a characterisation as it's easy to imagine. It has helped to make British acting in general more intelligent, less stagey and

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[4] *Directors' Theatre*. By JUDITH COOK. Harrap, £3.95, paper £2.15.

[5] *The Royal Shakespeare Company*. By DAVID ADDENBROOKE. William Kimber, £5.50.

[6] There is an interesting essay on the theoretical background to this practice in *The Eighteenth-Century English Stage*. Edited by KENNETH RICHARDS and PETER THOMSON. Methuen, £3.50.

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"camp", and the British theatre itself more serious and responsible. It has also done much to draw attention to the actor himself, as opposed to the purple silks billowing around him or the stunning cycloramic effects behind him. As Hands says,

> If he's surrounded by scenery all the energy of that actor is going into an object. If you take away all those things and leave him standing there with nothing and you say "think", he begins to move and it starts to register in his whole body. The whole energy of the thought is then available to the whole audience.

We've moved a long way since Charles Kean, whose Coriolanus, we're told, included the arch of Severus, the temples of Vesta, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, several Volscian camps, moles running into the sea, the Capitoline and Palatine hills, the Tiber, the "little thatched house of Romulus", and a cast of a million togas. In the RSC's "Roman" cycle, last year, the cast *was* the set, give or take the odd banner, spear or chair; and the company's director, Trevor Nunn, thinks that the trend must continue, for both artistic and economic reasons. That means

> a concentration on the actors, a concentration upon the language, and a concentration upon the imagination of the audience. We must stop dissipating our time, energy and money on long technical periods to create illusion. The RSC has got to spend its money from now on on the sheer excellence of the performance of the plays of Shakespeare by superbly accomplished actors.

Well and good. But Mr Nunn's academy has its critics, not all of them dim hankerers for the grand old days or haters of the vast, white beehive in which so many recent productions have been staged. Some feel that its pedagogues emphasise the importance of mind too much, of body too little: that there's a cerebral bias beyond the power of any "movement director" to correct. So it may be. But it should be added that the general fault is one the RSC inherited. The physical limitations of British actors and actresses were, after all, notorious long before the company came into being. If Janet Suzman presented Cleopatra as a sharp-witted, liberated woman rather than a full-bodied siren, she was only the latest of many to underplay the character's sensuality: Peggy Ashcroft, described by Kenneth Tynan as a "ravenous famine victim", or Edith Evans,[7] "really Lady Bracknell cruelly starved of cucumber sandwiches", or Margaret Leighton, so restrained that one was tempted to invert the remark famously made of Sarah Bernhardt in the

[7] Both Ashcroft and Evans appear in a gossipy, amiable book called *Dames of the Theatre*. (Edited by ERIC JOHNS. W. H. Allen, £3.95).

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COLLINS

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part. How like, how very like, the home life of our own dear Queen.

There's more force, perhaps, in a slightly different criticism: that there's a lack of size and adventure in too many contemporary performances, especially of Shakespeare. In *The Royal Shakespeare Company*, David Addenbrooke quotes J. C. Trewin: "it is as if an actor or actress were in the anteroom, refusing to go further, refusing to fling the door wide." You cannot have a Wolfit in a democratic ensemble, and with the Wolfits we've lost something more than rhetoric and rant. Too few performers are taking risks: too many, one feels, are less "alert, vivid and direct" than they might be, even in the RSC. It is encouraging that the Company has recently enlisted Ian McKellen, an actor notably unafraid of the bravura gesture or astonishing intonation, and pleasing that Nicol Williamson is being allowed to give such a large, strong performance as Macbeth, at any rate in the later parts of the play. But it's also a little worrying that so able and influential a director as Terry Hands should happily admit that "we look for actors who are not highly equipped technically", and that even the "burning or riveting personality" must be "organised by the ensemble." It is a pity that mistrust of "stars" often seems to mean suspicion of brilliance. Perhaps the reason is that the great, or potentially great, actor is too apt to escape the director's precisely-mapped plan for the play.

WHEN ACTORS BECOME more equal, more merely part of a production, the director obviously becomes more important. Two or three decades ago, it would have been difficult to conceive of a book called *Directors' Theatre*; yet here it is now, packed with names and interesting ideas, and only too aptly titled. More and more the British theatre is falling into the power of the Brooks, Nunns and Dexters. Obviously, the dictatorship varies in degree and benignity. Some, like Robin Phillips, think it of overriding importance to communicate the author's intentions, and some, like Jonathan Miller, feel free to make what they wish of his text. Some, like Hands, regard themselves as invisible "co-ordinators", and worry about even the odd, modest cut; others, like John Barton, are prepared to add many lines of their own discovery or invention. In a modish *King John* at Stratford the other day, there was even a lord to inform us that "the price of goods doth soar unto the towering heavens." But it's a curious truth that directors with the mildest aims can be very obtrusive in practice. Hands's *Romeo and Juliet* and Phillips's *Two Gentleman* were two of the most firmly shaped productions I can remember. John Russell Brown makes this point apropos Brook's famous, or infamous, *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In *Directors' Theatre*, Brook emphasises the amount of improvisation and play he encouraged during rehearsals:

> it was never a production fixed by a director in a certain way for the actors to play: I wanted a context in which the actor could continually come back remaking the play.

But, as Russell Brown points out, in choosing a context of trapezes, stilts and other circus gadgetry, Brook had already made vital choices before he even started: he was, in a sense, "forcing his actors to discover what he had been looking for." And the actors gave us "what Peter Brook had chosen from among what they, themselves, had found in the carefully agitated rehearsals."

So we got a very circumscribed *Dream*, one from which many intellectual and emotional possibilities had been excluded. It was a rigorously controlled experiment, not so very different from those Dr Miller openly admits to performing on the bodies of plays. His interview with Miss Cook is articulate and stimulating, and contains a notably effective attack on the tendency of the "fringe" to prefer physical to verbal self-expression. But it is disturbing, too.

> . . . when a work in the performing arts has been finished, after the first, second or third try, during which I think one owes it to the author to honour his explicit conscious intention, and to cooperate with him and try to imagine it as it was when he wrote it, then after that it enters this curious zone of the public area and his aesthetic rights in it lapse. The play becomes a public object and one should be able to do it exactly as one wants to. The only rules to apply are those of aesthetic consistency, formal elegance and accuracy, and artistic finesse, and that need have no bearing on what the author actually meant.

This is bold in theory, brazen in practice. It means that *Lear* can become a study of senility, or *The Tempest* an essay on colonialism, or *The Merchant* an attack on a shabby mercantile ethos. It means putting a personal slant on the plays, overemphasising some elements and ignoring others, selecting, defining and, of course, limiting. It means that a subtle, multivalent work may turn out to be "about" women's liberation or the hypocrisy of authority or some other single topic. Miller is by no means the only sinner, nor Shakespeare the only victim. All over the country directors are plucking plays from the theatrical wardrobe, and, in the interests of a narrow consistency or a shallow topicality or some specious dramatic "effect", trimming them to their own figures.

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THERE'S A LIVELY ATTACK on "trendy, plodding contemporariness" by Nigel Frith in *Theatre '74*. But it seems a little naive to assume that, if only directors relaxed their grasp and actors pulled themselves together, we might get "nobility" once more in our Shakespeare productions. Can one expect a thoroughly "noble" Othello, or a really "evil" Iago, in a society that no longer believes in such concepts? To insist so absolutely on it seems a prescription for actorishness. But it would be good if our performers were freer to look into themselves and discover what they can in the way of "nobility" or "evil" or anything else that seems to them possible and appropriate. That, at any rate, would seem to be the more cautious stance of John Russell Brown.

His *Free Shakespeare*[8] is superb: a scholarly, passionate assertion of views that many of us have felt but none dared pursue so far. It's the magnet towards which this review has been irresistibly edging, for its arguments have an application well beyond Shakespeare himself. Briefly, Russell Brown believes that the present generation of actor is severely cramped: by buildings, by lighting, sets, costumes, by designer and director, a cumulative conspiracy to dictate the precise content and style of his performance in perpetuity. "Creativity" has been substantially taken from him, and even what remains has a term strictly imposed on it. Once rehearsals are over, and the tailored result plumped on to the stage of the National or Aldwych or wherever, the performance can adapt only minimally, if at all. But a rich, resonant text needs the sort of open-ended acting that seems to have existed in the Elizabethan theatre:

> Every play, despite the elaborate words which were its controlling element, must have been precarious in performance, and every performance must have been different . . . sometimes—perhaps often—the audience was able to share the excitement we know when a rehearsal suddenly goes right, that transfigures routine work into surprising and exhilarating creation, the consuming and all-embracing excitement which the public today never witnesses and never shares.

Much, he thinks, could be achieved by a few actors in a bare room with plain lighting:

> Above all, I would like to see performances of an actors' company that had dispensed with the ways of working and thinking that lead to a "production". I would like them to forget the very word, and, with it, "designer", "director", and all those elements of theatre work that are involved with long-running, permanent successes. They would work for the sake of performances, each modified by its occasion and audience, and by their own developing imagination, understanding and skill.

[8] *Free Shakespeare*. By JOHN RUSSELL BROWN. Heinemann Educational, £2.00. paper 75p

Cinema Verité in America

Studies in Uncontrolled Documentary

Stephen Mamber

Cinema Verité in America explores the origins of a major new direction in filmmaking that has developed since about 1960. Through a detailed examination of the work of its leading American practitioners, it seeks to reveal the assumptions behind uncontrolled documentaries and the issues raised by this kind of filmmaking. The book consists mainly of film-by-film studies of Robert Drew Associates, The Maysles Brothers, D. A. Pennebaker, Richard Leacock and Frederic Wiseman. The relation between camera and subject, problems of structure and distinctive characteristics of each filmmaker's approach are also discussed. **£5.00** Illus.

Dianying/Electric Shadows

An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China

Jay Leyda

Jay Leyda, who worked with the Chinese film industry in Peking from 1959 to 1964, has had access to more Chinese films and relevant documents than any other Western scholar. In *Dianying* he describes both historic and current film production, using the films themselves as primary source material. He covers the film industry (the rise and fall of film studios, the influence of foreign filmmakers and the problems of distributors), gives synopses of important and representative films and introduces us to the notable filmmakers, actors and actresses of China. **£6.25** Illus.

The Poet as Filmmaker

Alexander Dovzhenko

Edited and translated by Marco Carynnyk

The Ukranian filmmaker Alexander Dovzhekno (1894–1956) is considered by many to have been one of the world's greatest film directors, although, because of political problems, he was able to complete only seven feature-length films. This book is a translation of his *Autobiography*, his *Notebooks*, and *The Enchanted Desna*, the first part of a planned autobiographical film tale. Included are an introduction by the editor, a bibliography of materials about Dovzhenko, a listing of all his published writings, a filmography that includes all his film projects whether realized or not, and a chronology of his life. **£4.50** Illus.

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THE DANGERS ARE self-evident. For instance, an immodest actor could seek to dominate, a timid one might quickly become set in his performance. Anarchy could occur, and so could a terrible drabness, worse by far than the narrow brilliance of so much at the National and RSC. But one fears this at least partly because the Russell Brown freedoms are now usually arrogated by the least competent actors. Such an enterprise need not, after all, be a self-important spree involving rampaging auto-didacts from Shoreditch. There are able actors in recognised companies who are quite capable of seizing many more opportunities than they now get; and one longs to see their talents stretched, if only as an experiment. To me, as a three- or four-times-a-week member of the stalls, it seems that our theatre lacks the excitement and immediacy it might have: too often the technical means smother the end, which is the confrontation of actor and audience. It is time for revolt—and, given Russell Brown's involvement with the National Theatre, why shouldn't that revolt begin on the South Bank: not on the five-section stage of the Lyttleton, perhaps, nor on the 45-foot-deep drum of the Olivier, but in the small studio theatre snuggling somewhere beside them? *There* would be an answer to the project's critics.

Orders of Merit

British & French Films—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

SITTING DOWN to two histories of the British cinema, each of which struggles in a very honest way to give substance and credibility to that most ill-used and ill-starred of institutions, I experienced a vivid aural memory. The year is about 1946, the time is nine o'clock on Monday night on the BBC Home Service, and the sound is that of a voice introducing the weekly radio programme on films. After the opening music, the presenter's determined tones can be heard, each and every week, finishing his spiel with the words . . "and since this is a *British* programme, the accent, naturally, will be on good *British* pictures."

This caught the atmosphere of things at the time very accurately. The words both reflected and boosted the chauvinism of an industry which felt—not without some justification—that it had hauled itself up by its own laces into a position of some dignity and prestige with the features and documentaries of the war years, and was not going to let things slip again without a fight. That radio compère's voice, ringing proudly over thirty years (echoing behind the stills of *Hue and Cry* and *Great Expectations* in Ernest Betts' and George Perry's books[1]), now seems absurd in its crude patriotic fervour on behalf of the home product—and in its desperate hopefulness. But it invested my own early filmgoing with a mistrust of certain other sorts of picture, which counted as a gain in the end. The immediate post-war period was not a bad time in which to have one's formative filmgoing years.

In such a "British" atmosphere, the implication (naturally) was that Hollywood was a bad thing. (Part of the same radio show, if I remember correctly, was often given to parodies of American film styles.) I suspect that many people taking their first serious interest in the cinema at that stage were indeed turned off the American cinema by the militant propaganda of the British, and that it took a long time for some of us to find any virtue in American pictures at all. But tilting the propaganda balance against Hollywood may have afforded an accidental protection (not available if our filmgoing had started a decade earlier or later) against some very big obstacles to intelligent appraisals of film, including the cult of the genre picture—most of the genres to which cults have been attached having an American origin. On the whole, we did not—and do not—give in to the Cult of the Western, or to the Cult of the Musical, or to any Cult which goes to make a season at the National Film Theatre. Thus inoculated against Hollywood,

[1] *The Film Business. A History of the British Cinema 1896–1972.* By ERNEST BETTS. Allen & Unwin, £5.50. *The Great British Picture Show.* By GEORGE PERRY. Hart-Davis MacGibbon, £5.50.

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some of us, in one generation at least, felt able to keep clear of the film critics' and intellectuals' fads and crazes, and look at pictures singly, coolly, on their own merits.

Of course, the short-term effects of that post-war faith in the "good British picture" (Celia Johnson refusing Robert Newton, her husband back from the war, a sentimental kiss in their new home in *This Happy Breed*) were the creation of false distinctions between the British and American industries, and the overestimation of the British films of the period. British films were not as far removed from the atmosphere and values of the American cinema as was fondly believed. The British industry behaved like the American when it could afford it (Pascal humping his own sphinx to Egypt to finish *Caesar and Cleopatra* for £1,278,000—"Mr Rank can sell a few more bags of flour"), and when doing battle with the Americans for the home market increasingly took on as much transatlantic colouring as it could. British films—as is ruefully admitted by all the qualifications and reservations in these histories—were not really very good. The great British picture experiences of my adolescence (which were also great experiences for grown-up critics as often as not) do not show up very well on the small or the large screen a quarter of a century later.

MAKING A PERSONAL select list of the best British pictures of the "post-war renaissance", I found it mainly tallied with Mr Perry's judgments, and is depressingly short. Memory can play tricks with the quality of films, and the least one can do is give in brackets the number of times one has seen a film, with the figure in italics if the most recent viewing was in the last two years. It's a matter of: *Brief Encounter* (3), an astonishing essay in social fantasy for 1945, positing a calm, secure, middle-class Britain in which the unconsummated agonies of these good British people could be enacted; *Great Expectations* (4), a decent exercise in fidelity to an original despite David Lean's surrender to the temptation of a Hollywood ending; *The Third Man* (6), which could go, with one or two Chabrol productions, into a "Best of Hitchcock" series from which all of Hitchcock—now *there's* a cult!—would be excluded; and *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (2), the most literate and stylish film the late Robert Hamer was allowed to make. Those other Ealing comedies were agreeable little films, but. . . . And as the best of post-war European cinema was reaching our screens, the British industry was genteelly ebbing away with *Spring in Park Lane* (1), *Maytime in Mayfair* (1), *Into the Blue* (1). The nadir comes in the early and middle 1950s (while we were getting the first

H·E·B

Early Stages

John Gielgud

One of the most delightful of all theatrical biographies, this book, originally published by Macmillan, has been out of print for many years. This new edition is slightly revised with new material and contains many new photographs that have not appeared before. As well as evoking the childhood and early years of one of our greatest actors, *Early Stages* provides an examination of some of Gielgud's major successes: *Richard II, Hamlet, King Lear, The Good Companions, Richard of Bordeaux* and many others. Originally the book ended with *Hamlet* in New York, but the new material brings the story up to the enormous success of *The Lady's Not For Burning* and the record-breaking productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Winter's Tale.* **£3.80**

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Peter Barnes

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Martin Esslin in *Plays and Players*

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of Bergman, Wajda, Ray, Kurosawa) when virtually every British film seemed to be casting back to wartime heroics, Jack Hawkins and Trevor Howard scheming behind prison-camp wire, slogging across the desert, drifting in open boats.

Both Mr Betts and Mr Perry document fully (and Mr Perry very lucidly) the real tragedy of an industry which has suffered not just from crazy spending, idle pretensions, philistine management and brutal cartelisation, but has so far signally failed to produce one British-born director (to get over the Losey problem) whose indubitable creative talent gives him *and* British cinema deserved international status. All the praise, to be honest praise, has to be faint: so many directors (is it inherent in the situation, or in them?) repeat themselves, run into the sand, go off the rails, show tantalising flickers of inspiration which remain unfulfilled—distribute the names of the Boulting Brothers, David Lean, Ken Russell, Michael Powell among these categories as seems appropriate. Of the two books Mr Betts' is much the less satisfying—muddled in its narrative line, inaccurate in places, a bit sententious. But it has a virtue in what threatens to seem a weakness. Plundering "the writings of critics past and present", he provides an intermittent anthology of enlivening quotes from James Agee, Richard Winnington, Pauline Kael and others.

Mr Perry is much more comfortably and firmly in command of his material, nicely balancing the dire and shameful economic history of the industry with his account of the development and achievement of British film, and providing an invaluable biographical guide. But any such history must turn, at many points, into a steady listing of names and titles, and then it's the critical dimension which suffers. Mr Perry concludes that "there is a national cinema—a living being, however sickly, that needs to be cherished." Missing, and needed, in both *The Great British Picture Show* and *The Film Business*, is some resolute sorting out, with hard critical concentration, of the high points in British cinema which could be adduced to support even so meagre and defensive a claim. They do exist, perhaps not in whole directors or even whole films, but certainly in fleeting passages of excitement and promise.

READING FAMOUS FILMS in transcript, shot-by-shot and line-by-line of dialogue (increasingly possible in the excellent Lorrimer series) is most fascinating—but then perhaps only really helpful if one has recently seen the pictures in question. John Weightman's four "Masterworks" are *The Italian Straw Hat*, *La Grande Illusion*, *La Ronde* and *The Wages of Fear*.[2] The word masterworks makes a lot of assumptions; and besides, are they a personal "top four", or a choice of the best four available? Among films which would appear to be on his wavelength, *A Nous la Liberté* and *La Règle du Jeu* have already appeared in print. *The Wages of Fear*, Clouzot's saga of the two lorries full of nitroglycerine crossing the South American wastes, seemed to me, when I saw it twenty years ago, a piece of high old melodramatic fustian: the transcript suggests a degree of subtlety neither it, nor Clouzot generally, possessed. *La Ronde*, on the other hand, visually witty and ingenious, yet essentially a decorative, minor piece of film-making, reads much less well even than one remembers it.

With the only silent film of the quartet, *The Italian Straw Hat*, the visual jokes are virtually impossible to transcribe:

> The horse is ruminatively eating foliage from the bush, on which an unlikely object is hanging—a woman's straw hat. . . . Then Fadinard suddenly gazes with astonishment. . . . As he sees the horse munching the straw hat. (*Still*)

The still does *something* to bring back the memory of that unfortunate moment, but most of the transcription leadenly and quite inappropriately obstructs one's recollection of a *near*-masterwork of pace and humour (on Professor Weightman's interpretation "in terms of Existentialist psychology and the modern French obsession with the *object*", I pass). The genuine masterwork here is, of course, *La Grande Illusion*, Jean Renoir's study of war, class, pride, a whole series of dissolving "great illusions", seen with a humane, affectionate, infinitely discerning eye and transmitted in images and sequences which seem to gather new layers of meaning at each encounter. Here, transcription and translation tend rather to increase and simplify the social difference between Boeldieu, the aristocratic officer, and his fellow prisoners: on screen, between the young Pierre Fresnay and Jean Gabin, it's a smaller, much subtler gap. And mere description can't do proper justice to von Stroheim's bravura performance as the German commandant, but can call up the visual images in the mind.

Granted the *donnée* of a motorised civilisation tipping over from folly and stupidity into actual, homicidal madness—murderous fights between aggrieved drivers, bodies ignored at the roadside, burning cars littering the landscape—Godard could have developed a brilliant allegory of the

[2] *Masterworks of the French Cinema*. Introduced by JOHN WEIGHTMAN. Lorrimer, £3.50

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West contriving its own comeuppance; and for about one third of *Weekend*[3] it looked as if he just might. The transcript solidly confirms what one saw on the screen: a powerful idea wilfully stirred up into a bloody and bloody-minded mess. Once upon a time, Godard understood the use of implication and economy: he assembled the garish iconography of his urban bourgeois world with precision and point. The long monologues or interviews (in, say, *Masculin-Feminin*) commented on real people in imaginable social contexts. Now it is all gone. One knows it was there, but after seven years' watching the most substantial talent in post-war French cinema throw everything wantonly away, it's almost possible to believe that the more modest Truffaut, on whom Don Allen has written an illuminating monograph[4] had more to offer from the start. Which isn't true. He has never settled, moving with unfailing charm, shrewdness and humour from the sharp social observation of *Les Quatre Cent Coups* to the plangent statement of the sheer impossibility of love in *Jules et Jim*, to the uncomfortable sci-fi exercise of *Fahrenheit 451*, to sub-Hitchcock (and far from the best) in *The Bride Wore Black*, to truly catastrophic melodrama in *Mississipi Mermaid*, to gentler domestic tangles in *Baisers Volés* and *Domicile Conjugale*, to yearnings for Hollywood, where they never did it on hand-held cameras, in *Day for Night*. Nothing is done without integrity, little is done with passion: Truffaut films are acceptable and unmemorable, with the exception of his one masterwork, *L'Enfant Sauvage*.

MR ALLEN'S BOOK is a model of sensitive, observant, unpretentious criticism, the ideal kind of guide to his subject. By contrast, Robin Wood, in his introduction to *Weekend*, wallows in confusion to justify Godard's extravagances: "the challenge [is] in its horrifying optimism." *Weekend* closes with the words "*Fin de Cinéma*" after a young wife has sat round with a group of hippy cannibals eating her husband. So that no one may be confused, Roy Paul Madsen has

[3] *Weekend/Wind from the East*. By JEAN-LUC GODARD. Lorrimer, £1.25.
[4] *Truffaut*. By DON ALLEN. Secker Warburg, £1.30.

Seen Any Good Films Lately?

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written a 550pp. study of *The Impact of Film*,[5] a compendious effort of research into the effect of the film on the viewer: any kind of film, any kind of viewer. I found it indigestible; but suspect I shall find it indispensable. The medium is a minefield of ambiguities.

[5] *The Impact of Film*. By ROY PAUL MADSEN. Macmillan, £6.50.

The Glory & the Dream

Myths of Cinema—By ISABEL QUIGLY

MYTHS ARE NOT TAUGHT or learned but absorbed by a sort of osmosis. Nurture seems to have little to do with them, nature everything. In exactly similar circumstances one man's myth is another man's joke, and what can be a source of intense imaginative glory may just as well provoke nothing—not the smallest emotional shiver or mental tingle. When I was a child in what was, I suppose, still the dying hiccup of the Renaissance, we took in without really trying a general mythology that included the inhabitants of the night sky and Lemprière's Classical Dictionary—the mainstream Trojans and Greeks, the Olympians and their better-known offspring, heroes and beasts that hold the kind of position, at once familiar and fanciful, that the Wombles (say) hold in the lives of today's young. Not any more. For child or adult, the night sky is full of strangers. But there are plenty of myths nearer home, and the cinema has been called their most potent begetter.

I have a feeling that myths are largely visual, in the sense of visionary, at least. They come in shapes and patterns, as satisfyingly seeable, or rather imaginable, forms and combinations and colours. Even when they come from a literary source they are in most cases transferred, I think, to a visual level. When Don Quixote found his knightly stories a source of almost achievable romance and richness he went out to *look* for what they could give him, which was imitable only with a pinch of madness. The American West gives exactly the same sort of glory to plenty of people today—another country of romance and richness not too far removed in time although, when you set out to look for it, just over the horizon; a place, an attitude, that cannot be envisaged without its visual images of canyons, great landscapes, dreamlike horses of immeasurable speed. The cinema, like the tellers of chivalric tales, has its mirage-like horizons, endlessly beckoning and retreating.

These myths and fantasies, images and dreams (visual aliens and cultural left-overs in most people's world), which the cinema puffed out in its heyday like some great scented power-station, are kept alive not so much by the memories of ageing film-fans as by the revivers and archaeologists whose books pour out at an extraordinary rate, suggesting an extraordinary readership. Extraordinarily large or merely extraordinary, meaning odd? Hard to say; they vary too much in quality and kind, both the books and, presumably, their readers. And anyway, like all confraternities of enthusiasts, from covens of sardine-tasters to makers of pot-pourri or collectors of Peruvian bus-tickets, old-style film-fans, by which I mean, on the whole, backward-looking film-fans, vary through all the grades of lunacy if judged by mere non-enthusiasts who see a film once and, if they really love it, maybe twice.

The books I am talking about are for the keen mythologist, if that is the word for him, whose visual imagination has been caught, stirred and spun round by (say) cowboys or vampires or the heroic rebel, through whose dreams, day or sleeping, stalk hoods or G-men, private eyes, Bengal Lancers, samurai, Felix the Cat, Flash Gordon, Mary Pickford. Some of them are picture books of lost faces and expressions, superseded dreams of beauty among which an occasional ageless face (Garbo's, say) survives with a tranquillity outside fashion, a myth on its own, outside its period. Some are strip cartoons of a lost way of life. Some are analyses of particular qualities, attitudes and appearances in the cinema, which combine to produce myths. These may be visually propagated but they very soon become part of an inner landscape, imaginative country whose inhabitants are not just larger than life but longer than time.

"VISIONS OF YESTERDAY or dreams of tomorrow, who is to say which exerts the strongest pull in the psyche of man?" says the epigraph to Jeffrey Richards' *Visions of Yester-*

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day[1], a study of what can roughly be called right-wing cinema. Temperamentally, of course, while the left tends to dream of tomorrow, the right tends to brood over the past, to discover unalterable patterns there and to compare the present unfavourably with them; and the three sorts of right-wing eyesight examined here were all the products of much older historical and cultural myths well before they came to impose their own upon the public. Mr Richards' large, well-illustrated book is divided into three parts and covers a good deal of ground so far neglected. The first part deals with "the cinema of Empire", or films on the theme of British imperialism and the attitudes and patterns of life it imposed; the second with American populism as seen in the work of Ford, Capra and Leo McCarey; the third with the Nazi cinema, from Leni Riefenstahl at one end to directly anti-British propaganda films made during the war at the other.

The author, clearly a man of broad horizons, is a lecturer in Byzantine history at Lancaster, currently writing a social history of the early medieval Papacy and a study of the films of John Ford: which, in a world of specialisation and cinematic moles, is a pleasant surprise, like meeting a Bunny Girl with a Ph.D. He writes in a lively, journalesy way ("Moribund, Oxbridge-orientated university panjandrums are still to be heard up and down the country chuntering that . . ." he says on the very first page), and packs in plenty of useful stuff, fact or opinion, at a fairly popular level.

WITH HIS OPINION of many films it is often hard to agree. Is the second version of *Goodbye Mr Chips* (the Peter O'Toole one) *really* "one of the finest films the cinema has produced"? Is *The Prisoner of Zenda really* "one of the purest and noblest fables of love and honour ever put on the screen"? And can you *really* say of John Cromwell's film of it that "the direction is faultless, the writing brilliant, the production impeccable, the score unforgettable and the actors so perfect that one would be forgiven for thinking that the parts had been written for them"? Like so many enthusiasts and collectors, especially enthusiasts for particular forms of kitsch, Mr Richards has come to love what he collects, then to exaggerate its merits absurdly, and finally, quite straight-faced, to take kitsch for greatness. If you concentrate on, say, the shape, colour, typography, age and general beauty of Peruvian bus tickets you may soon persuade yourself that they are comparable as works of art with the St Matthew Passion. All of which makes one nervous about Mr Richards' estimate of the obscurer films.

[1] *Visions of Yesterday*. By JEFFREY RICHARDS. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £5.50.

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Still, his book has plenty of good things in it, first of all an endlessly interesting theme. It is not a retelling of old tales or a rehashing of stale opinions, like so many film books, but a personal view of a subject (or rather three subsections of a subject) he clearly both enjoys and has considered at length and in some depth. Secondly, it is the work of a historian who can sift evidence, select examples, set things in the context of the past, in general organise his huge amount of material and move, intellectually, beyond the confines of the Gaumont or the average film critic's column. He may be askew in his rating of some of the films but he sets them in their historical context far more knowledgeably than most. He generalises, but at least he has a general understanding of what he writes about, a panoramic view of events that allows him to make not just sweeping statements but broad judgments.

THE CHAPTER TITLES give an idea of his range. On the imperial cinema they include "The Ideology of Empire", "Literature of Empire", "Myths and Myth-Figures", "The Old School Tie", "The Imperial Archetype", and "The Gods of Empire"; on populism, "The Ideology of Populism", "Frank Capra: the Classic Populist", "Leo McCarey: the Fantasy of Goodwill", and "John Ford: the Folk Memory"; and on the Nazi cinema "The Ideology of National Socialism", "Leni Riefenstahl—the Documentary and Myth", "Nazi Feature Films: Themes and Archetypes 1. The Leader and his Followers. 2. Discipline, Comradeship and Fatherland", "The Eternal Jew and Perfidious Albion."

Mr Richards is good on the mythical, visionary aspect of these films. "In a very real sense, all three of the movements we have been examining were religious and the films can be seen as ritual enactments of the creed," he writes in his concluding chapter.

> Kipling wrote that "all ritual is fortifying" and this gives us the key to understanding these films. Their purpose was, I would contend, not to convert the unbeliever but to sustain and encourage the believer. . . . Repetition is an integral part of ritual. It is only by repetition that the message is drummed home. It also explains why these movies are anti-intellectual. Intellect implies a questioning of beliefs. These genres required unquestioning acceptance of beliefs. The fundamental aspects of the litany, such as "The Führer knows best", "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" and "The White Man's Burden", were dramatised over and over again. As with all religions these cinematic expressions of the creed have their gods and heroes who are apotheosized, their icons to provide focal points of emotion, their archetypes for audience identification. The heroes are ritualised: the Lincoln-Christ populist "Good Man", the "heaven-born" administrator of the Imperial films, the Nazi Führer-figure. . . . The film stars are important in

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this context. They are the high priests of the celluloid religions, the ritual enactors of the dramatised creed, the hierophants in the masks. . . . The musical scores too had their religious function. . . . The folk songs and hymns of America are an integral part of John Ford's films, the Nazi party marching tunes crop up constantly in their films and Elgar is the obvious inspiration for the musical scores of some of the Imperial films.

Well summarised and well said. Mr Richards is excellent, too, on Leni Riefenstahl, whom he treats (I think fairly), without making moral judgments, as "an undoubted cinematic genius." His descriptions and analyses of her *Olympiad* and *Triumph of the Will*, with their evocation of "the savage power and panoply of Nazism", are the best thing in the book. Those of us who saw it in action may be inoculated against it forever but I have with dismayed interest heard young people talking together, without any sense of guilt, of the fascination they found in one or two of the specifically Nazi scenes of the film *Cabaret*, particularly the (to me frightening, to them apparently stirring) singing of the "Tomorrow belongs to me" song outside a country inn, led by a beautiful blond boy, with everyone gradually caught up in the mass emotion and, at first reluctantly, then excitedly, rising to join in.

ROY ARMES is a more serious critic, who writes better and avoids Jeffrey Richards' pitfalls—cliché and overemphasis. His *Film and Reality*[2] is a stimulating history of the film from Lumière and Méliès to Kenneth Anger, and, short though it is (228 pages) for so vast a subject and the range he covers, it suggests a rich compost of reading, interests and intellectual activity in general in which the text grows in a satisfactorily organic way as part (you feel) of a cultural whole, an outlook embracing much else—for instance, in its treatment of surrealist and underground films the whole modern movement is invoked, the relevance to it of such things as cubism, the narrative techniques of the new novel, and architectural theory. This is fine. We need to be reminded that although a film is a film is a film and demands specialist attention, it exists in a world where other things count and the pressures of these other things must, in the end, affect every single thing about it; that culture, in other words, exists as a great metaphor of life, and no part of it can escape the implications of the rest.

Like *Visions of Yesterday*, *Film and Reality* is gallically divided into three parts, each exemplifying a particular view of reality: the first, "the uncovering of the real" deals roughly with documentary; the second, "the imitating of the real",

[2] *Film and Reality*. By ROY ARMES. Penguin Books, 45p.

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roughly with feature films; the third, "the questioning of the real", roughly with experimental cinema. In the first case the film-maker's "prime concern is not to invent or imagine but to place people, objects, settings and experiences in front of the camera and to make the audience see." In the second he "fastens instead on the film's power to offer a resemblance or imitation of life . . . used not as an end in itself but as a means of creating satisfactory fictions." In the third, he seeks "not to convey surface realism or to sustain a make-believe but to explore the inner reality beneath the surface."

The American logician Charles Pierce posits three categories of sign: index (e.g. weathercock, sundial, footprint, or, in medical terms, pulse rate), icon (portrait, map, diagram), symbol (denoting a purely conventional link). Peter Wollen in his *Signs and Meaning in the cinema*, gives Rossellini as an example of the "indexical" film-maker, Joseph von Sternberg as the "iconic" and Eisenstein as the "symbolic." Mr Armes himself applies the theory to sound—cinéma-vérité track, live and unscripted (indexical), musical accompaniment (symbolic), and in between them studio track combining real and artificial sounds (iconic).

So Part I, "Film Realism", indexical, covers the cinema in its earliest, most functional phase, though it very soon became less functional and more contrived. Flaherty's Nanook had to build a new igloo to get the equipment inside it and his Aran fishermen had to learn how to use harpoons and catch sharks in a way that had lapsed fifty years before. Part 2, "Film Illusion", iconical, covers the fiction film, Hollywood, the stars, the various genres, what most people think of as the movies. And Part 3, "Film Modernism", symbolic, covers the modern movement from Eisenstein onwards, in the belief that

> the cinema is the most exciting medium for the expression of modernist ideas: creating its own space-time continuum, mixing the real and the fictional, objective narration and subjective viewpoint, and building up a multiple perspective in the manner of a cubist painting.

AFTER THIS, down to earth with a bump when it becomes clear how enormous a subject world cinema is, if, in a book as comprehensive-seeming as *Film and Reality*, the world's largest film industry, Japan's, is scarcely mentioned; only a few of the major directors to illustrate particular points. Richard N. Tucker's *Japan: Film Image*[3] takes us not just into an unknown world but into almost unimaginable imaginative country. The few Japanese films we have seen here are not representative, it seems; and even with them a knowledge of the cultural background is essential. So a potted history of Japan and a quite helpful explanation of much that is culturally mysterious go with a brisk history of the film itself. Briefly, Japan was closed to the world in 1624 by the "Edict of Isolation" and for 230 years sealed away from industrialisation, western expansion and all the external rest of it. One fine day in 1853 Commodore Perry sailed in bearing gifts, among them a Daguerrotype outfit for the Emperor. Mr Tucker sees this as possibly a direct reason for the early development of the cinema in Japan. Certainly there were touring magic-lantern shows in 1894, Edison's Kinetoscope and Vitascope were shown in 1896, and the first film was shot in Japan in 1897. Two years later it had its first public showing, but this was to a picked audience including royalty, which set the cinema up from the start as an entertainment for top people. "Japan never experienced the equivalent of a Nickelodeon," says Mr Tucker.

So on to the enormous output of the Japanese cinema between then and now, a very little of it familiar to us, most of it not. The unfamiliarity in any case is not so much that of atmosphere or scenery or even social custom as of attitude and, at a deeper level, of myth. On the one hand, bushido, the code of the samurai; on the other,

[3] *Japan: Film Image*. By RICHARD N. TUCKER. Studio Vista, £2.95.

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students so far left they think the Maoists reactionary. (Arnold Lunn in *The Harrovians*, incidentally, as long ago as 1913 suggested bushido as just the thing for the trendy public schoolboy and indeed called one of his chapters "More lessons in bushido": not as dreary or as conventional as "good form", it was, he suggested, a tough, dignified, aristocratic outlook less concerned with playing the game than with keeping your end up.) In the middlebrow middle, lots of monster films, porn and buckets of blood.

A GLANCE AT THE MORE POP PROMOTERS or at least purveyors of myths, historians and illustrators of the various genres. Well-written and lively, though necessarily sketchy, are three illustrated studies by Ivan Butler, *The War Film*, *Religion in the Cinema*, *Horror in the Cinema*.[4] Another series, edited by Sheridan Morley, is of picture books with a text rather than *vice versa*, but again the writers have done well with their brisk treatment of a big subject: Ian Cameron with *Adventure and the Cinema*, John Kobal with *Romance and the Cinema*.[5] Excellent text, too, with suitably horrifying pictures and introduction by Roger Manvell, in William Faure's *Images of Violence*,[6] which suggests we know little and ought to understand more about violence on film, its causes and effects, what it does to us and what it tells about us. Then down to the low-brow level with a book as huge and handsome as most of its male stars: Paul Trent's and Richard Lawton's *The Image Makers*,[7] a meagre text with studio portraits of the stars, some of whom have dated sadly into what seems almost ugliness, while others have lasted, touchingly, into a new sort of beauty. Interviews with some of the oldies provide laughs and pathos: Joan Blondell, for instance: "During the war I insisted on signing for every soldier that asked for a photo. That took *hours*! They came so fast!" And at the bottom of the pile, William K. Everson's *The Bad Guys, a Pictorial History of the Movie Villain* and *The Detective in Film, a Pictorial Treasury of the Screen Sleuth from* 1903 *to the Present*,[8] with negligible texts but dozens of villains from the great train robbers of 1903, and of sleuths from

[4] *The War Film. Religion in the Cinema. Horror in the Cinema.* By IVAN BUTLER. Tantivy Press, £3.50, £1.10, £1.10; A. S. Barnes, $8.95, $2.95, $2.95.

[5] *Adventure and the Cinema.* By IAN CAMERON. Studio Vista, £2.95. *Romance and the Cinema.* By JOHN KOBAL. Studio Vista, £2.95.

[6] *Images of Violence.* By WILLIAM FAURE. Studio Vista, £3.60, paper £1.95.

[7] *The Image Makers.* Text by PAUL TRENT. Designed by RICHARD LAWTON. Octopus Press, £3.95.

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the earliest Sherlock Holmes, a Danish one in 1908.

THE CINEMA BEATS TIME not just because films can be preserved (more or less, and with difficulty) but because it shows things in the past both flatly, as an external record of the way they looked, and idealistically, visionarily, as a record of their makers' inner eye. Of course its earliest and most obvious function was recording: moving train, galloping horse, running man. But one step ahead of that and it ceased to be flat and uninvolved, it showed not just the way things looked, unadorned, at a particular moment, but the way people wanted them to look, adorned by idealism and wistfulness, in that particular age: not just objective appearances but the subjective manipulation of appearances.

Over the factual world, in the commercial cinema at least, the film-maker lays an idealised world, mostly his own but partly his audience's, turning the factual base into what he and his audience would like it to be. So we see what they admired, coveted, dreamed of, fifty, forty, thirty, twenty years ago; we become visually familiar with what, in earlier times, was unknown or forgotten—the preceding generation or two, not necessarily at the high level of the surviving artists' eyes, but at the middling or low or quite inartistic level of the middlingly-placed camera, whose still realism the cinema set spinning.

Dawn Walkers

Anxious eyes loom down the damp-black streets—
Pale staring girls who are walking away hard
From beds where love went wrong or died or turned away,
Treading their misery beneath another day
Stamping to work into another morning.

In all our youths there must have been some time
When the cold dark has stiffened up the wind
But suddenly, like a sail stiffening with wind,
Carried the vessel on, stretching the ropes, glad of it.

But listen to this now: this I saw one morning.
I saw a young man running, for a bus I thought,
Needing to catch it on this murky morning,
Dodging the people crowding to work or shopping early.
And all heads stopped and turned to see how he ran
To see would he make it, the beautiful strong young man.
Then I noticed a girl running after, calling out "John."
He must have left his sandwiches I thought.
But she screamed "John wait." He heard her and ran faster.
Using his muscled legs and his studded boots.
We knew she'd never reach him. "Listen to me, John.
Only once more," she cried. "For the last time, John, please wait, please listen."
He gained the corner in a spurt and she
Sobbing and hopping with her red hair loose
(Made way for by the respectful audience)
Followed on after, but not to catch him now.
Only that there was nothing left to do.

The street closed in and went on with its day.
A worn old man standing in the heat from the baker's
Said "Surely to God the bastard could have waited."

Jenny Joseph

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EDUCATION

From Texas to Sussex

An Odyssey of Campus Protest

By Michael Vannoy Adams

WHO REMEMBERS "TCU"? The anti-hero of Norman Mailer's novel *Why Are We in Vietnam?*—a sporting character who uses advanced war technology to annihilate wild animals—graduated from Texas Christian University as "an All-American boy" in 1936.[1] A private institution of 6,500, TCU is known in the United States mainly as a Football Fraternity campus, where fathers and mothers send their sons and daughters to get a conservative education. The University sponsors the international piano competition named in honour of Van Cliburn. Occasionally a scholar of repute is endowed as a visiting professor (recently J. H. Plumb occupied a special chair in history). But essentially TCU has one commitment: to protect, *in loco parentis*, the students entrusted to its care.

I graduated from TCU in 1970. During my time there the Viet Nam War was at its height. One of the local issues that concerned those of us who opposed the conflict in South-east Asia was whether nationally-known anti-War activists had the right to use University facilities as a forum to criticise the government's policy. The TCU student speaker's committee invited Dick Gregory (Black comedian, author of *Nigger*, and supporter of Eugene McCarthy's Presidential campaign) and Jane Fonda (actress, women's liberationist, and now wife of Tom Hayden, founder of Students for a Democratic Society). The Chancellor of TCU vetoed both invitations, on the ground that to allow Gregory and Fonda to speak at the University would dignify their dissent, and bestow institutional praise upon their anti-Viet Nam folly. This refusal betrayed a more basic assumption: the notion that young men and women cannot be trusted to make rational judgements when confronted with opposing evidence and argument. The administration imposed a limit on free speech at TCU in the self-righteous belief that anti-War ideas were not only wrong in themselves, but subversive—that rhetoric would prove irresistible to the "immature" student.

In conversation with me the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs compared Dick Gregory to Adolf Hitler. Ironically, Gregory had been a guest speaker at the University a few years before. He was no longer welcome because he had become an economic liability, like Fonda. If TCU had allowed either of them to lecture, the news media would have reported the visits. And this publicity might have offended the University's traditional constituency of upper-middle-class citizens and white-collar business interests. TCU was simply unwilling to run the financial risk, inconsiderable as it may have been, of alienating provincial opinion.

TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY is situated in Fort Worth, near Dallas, where Southern Methodist University, a private institution of similar size and sentiment, is located. During my student days at TCU, SMU had its own dispute over free speech. The issue there centred on the "Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out" LSD advocacy of Timothy Leary. Leary had been dismissed from his teaching position at Harvard for conducting drug experiments with undergraduates, and he had recently been arrested for importing marijuana across the Mexican border. At the moment Leary was free on bail.

SMU was in the middle of a crucial fund-raising campaign. And Leary was certainly a more controversial figure than either Dick Gregory or Jane Fonda. University supporters who objected to Leary's scheduled appearance let it be known that they would withdraw their financial pledges if Leary were permitted to lecture. In spite of this dollars-and-cents intimidation the President of SMU affirmed Leary's "right to speak", on one condition: that Sidney Cohen, a medical authority on drug abuse, be invited to respond in opposition. For once in my youthful university experience, a University administrator had not only sufficient resolution to guarantee free speech, but enough imagination actually to improve the opportunity for critical discourse.

[1] Norman Mailer, *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1970), p. 29.

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IN THE AUTUMN of 1970 I enrolled as a graduate student in the American Civilisation Department of the University of Texas at Austin, where John R. Silber was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, by far the largest school in a state institution of 36,000. Silber earned a reputation as a man dedicated to excellence in education. A kind of philosopher-king, he hired and fired faculty with a more or less free hand. He made friends of those who believed in his personal vision and enemies of those who believed in specialisation. His pet projects were "*Plan II*," a liberal programme for undergraduates with superior aptitude scores and grade averages, and "*Comparative Studies*," an inter-disciplinary programme run by only seven professors, men with high salaries and few responsibilities except to themselves, their students, and Silber. (Among these scholars were the classicists William Arrowsmith and D. S. Carne-Ross; the psychologist Sigmund Koch; the Romance linguist and culture critic Roger Shattuck; and the art historian Donald Weismann.)

Inevitably Silber's single-minded purpose, and sometimes high-handed methods, bred discontent. Colleagues of a more practical bent resented his power. Eventually the Austin Board of Regents, composed of political appointees of the Governor of Texas, decided to divide Arts and Sciences into three separate schools—Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social and Behavioural Sciences—and to abolish Silber's position as Dean. (Silber was retained as a professor of philosophy and his salary increased to $33,000.) Still refusing to admit defeat, sure of his principles, he made one last attempt to regain control, and indeed to expand it. The post of permanent President of UT-Austin (University of Texas, Austin) was vacant. Silber's application for the office was notable; on purely academic grounds Silber was one of the two or three most qualified persons in the competition. But the University trustees, motivated by political considerations, rejected his bid as a matter of course. John Silber, now President of Boston University, is no stranger—as ENCOUNTER readers must know—to "politicised" education.[2]

FOR AT LEAST three-and-a-half decades the University of Texas at Austin has been the scene of sporadic intolerance. In 1939 "Pappy" O'Daniel, a radio entertainer and flour salesman, whose homely political slogan was "*Pass the Biscuits, Please*," became Governor of Texas. His appointees to the Board of Regents fired professors and blacklisted library books in a crusade against liberal thought. When the University President was dismissed for opposing O'Daniel, the American Association of University Professors investigated and censured the trustees. During the 1950s a new Board of Regents suppressed the student newspaper. At that time Willie Morris—later a Rhodes Scholar and editor of the *Texas Observer* (and, subsequently in New York, *Harper's*)—was an undergraduate journalist at UT-Austin. Anti-social oil and gas legislation favourable to corporate interests was a major issue in the state. Morris wrote a series of editorials against drilling-rig bills, and provoked a reaction. The trustees intervened, and for a limited period imposed prior censorship.[3]

DURING THE 1960s, when I was in Austin at the University of Texas, the Regents tried unsuccessfully to prohibit campus sales of a hippie-New Left "underground" newspaper. The courts ruled that the attempt to restrain distribution was unconstitutional. Later the University administration refused to allow the "National Gay Liberation Conference" to take place on campus; officials were apprehensive about the publicity that would accompany the event. When the homosexuals came to Austin anyway, to hold their meeting off-campus, a student film society showed Andy Warhol's *Trash* as a sympathetic gesture. A State legislator, disgusted by the movie's overt sex-and-drugs theme (and unaffected by Warhol's serious satire on what William Burroughs has called "the algebra of need" that distorts human desire), assailed the film as a simple affront to morals.

In contrast to these efforts to limit expression, the speakers' committee at UT-Austin enjoyed relative freedom. While I was there the student union invited a broad spectrum of lecturers, from William F. Buckley (on the Right) to Herbert Marcuse (on the Left). Ken Kesey, who, like Leary, has been prosecuted for marijuana possession (and whose experiments with LSD have been documented in Tom Wolfe's *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*), spoke to a standing-room-only audience.

MY MASTER'S THESIS at UT-Austin was supervised by W. W. Rostow, formerly a government adviser in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

During the American military intervention in Viet Nam, Walt Rostow was a firm advocate of

[2] Ronnie Dugger, "The Changing of the UT Guard," *Texas Observer*, 7 Aug. 1970, pp. 2–5, and his "The Politics of Knowledge," *Change*, Feb. 1974, pp. 30–39, 60–61. See, in ENCOUNTER (August 1974), John Silber's article "Poisoning the Wells of Academe."

[3] Willie Morris, *North Toward Home* (1967), pp. 167–8, 188–9.

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strategic bombing. When the conflict in Southeast Asia made Lyndon Johnson's term a tragedy, Professor Eric F. Goldman characterised Rostow as "a fervid, almost exuberant hawk since the far, far JFK days." David Halberstam says that personally Rostow was "always eager, hard-working . . . ingenuously open and friendly," but that politically he was inflexible and cocksure, with "an almost mystic belief in air power." Earlier, at the end of Kennedy's thousand days, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., described Rostow as "a man of unusual inventiveness of mind and copiousness of expression . . . inexhaustible in his capacity to meet every crisis with a plan and unfailing in his decency and enthusiasm."[4]

Before entering the government Rostow was a scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. MIT granted him a leave of absence so that he might serve on the White House staff. In 1964, while he was still engaged in policy planning, the time-limit on his sabbatical expired. Formally, Rostow had no choice but to resign immediately from the government and resume forthwith his teaching duties, or to remain in politics and sever, by default, his connection with MIT. As a result, he tendered his academic resignation. Four years later, upon Johnson's retirement, Rostow left the government. It would have been nothing less than reasonable for him to have expected an offer to return to MIT, where he had taught since 1950. But the Institute refused to renew his contract. MIT publicly denied that Rostow's pro-war decision-making had anything at all to do with the rejection. Faculty members gave three reasons for turning him down: (*1*) Rostow's teaching style was out-dated; (*2*) his own interests had shifted from economic growth to world politics; and (*3*) his research conclusions were superficial.[5]

THE DISHONESTY of this bill of particulars was evident to one and all. As *New York Times* columnist James Reston wrote, Rostow's "gifts as a lecturer are exceptional, and his experience after eight years in the White House and the State Department make him a much more valuable teacher than when he left Cambridge. . . ."[6] Rostow had always considered himself a "political economist" in the classic sense of the term. Modernisation, he argued, was a subtle and complex process that depended on a variety of non-economic factors, not the least of

[4] Eric F. Goldman, *The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson* (1969), p. 510; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (1972), pp. 156, 161; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days* (1965), p. 377.
[5] *Time*, 13 December 1968, p. 48.
[6] James Reston, "The Strange Case of Walt Rostow," *New York Times*, 6 December 1968.

THE CENTENARY OF

CHURCHILL

The centenary of Sir Winston Churchill's birth fell on November 30th, 1974. He died ten years ago in January. Sir John Colville, who was his Private Secretary during his Prime Ministerships, gives a discerning appreciation of Sir Winston's personal characteristics when at work on his great achievements.

Other articles include:

The Emperor Nicholas I in England, by W. Bruce Lincoln; **Almanzor the Victorious,** by Jan Read; **John of Salisbury** by J. J. N. McGurk; **Tonga and its Freedom,** by George Woodcock; **Huascar, the Hi-jacked Battleship,** by David Woodward; **The British in Paris,** by Joanna Richardson.

In the January issue

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which was international politics. His most famous book, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, was by far the best-selling theoretical history of the transformation of nations from traditional to technological societies.

Pretexts aside, Rostow was penalised for his role in the Viet Nam conflict. The MIT administration felt itself threatened by the protest movement inspired by Noam Chomsky and others. In private, Institute officials acknowledged that their reluctance to reappoint Rostow was motivated by fear that faculty and students would use Rostow's continued employment as an excuse to turn the campus into an anti-war battlefield.

Subsequently UT-Austin offered Rostow and his wife tenured posts in economics and history, and in government. Silber, in fact, is given credit for arranging the appointments. I studied under Rostow; and while writing articles on draft resistance and other topics for the *Texas Observer*, I watched a number of students take it upon themselves to harass Rostow in the name of righteous indignation. Among other things, their tactics consisted of taunting him as a "war criminal" as he walked across campus to class. However, Rostow has stated that he regards his treatment by the students at UT-Austin as "almost wholly correct."

I LEFT TEXAS for England in the autumn of 1972. I came to the University of Sussex to write a *D.Phil.* dissertation in the School of American Studies headed by Marcus Cunliffe. Two months after my arrival I received a letter from a friend at Austin. She had attended an informal seminar conducted by Rostow and another professor on the Paris peace negotiations. The meeting had been disrupted by student protesters who shouted abuse, marched up and down the room, and prevented those present from hearing what was said. My correspondent, who previously had participated in the Viet Nam Moratorium demonstrations in Washington, had this to say:

> . . .What a great and noble contribution to the end of the war! They were awful. Patrolling the aisles like little Nazi stormtroopers, strutting. They asked all the questions, all hostile, and then freely interrupted the answers to laugh, swear, or comment hostilely. I know you shouldn't get in and fight with them, but can you let them take over? I know their arguments inside out. But I am mortally offended by their methods. The two things that offended me most are their belief that I can't critically listen—to constantly provoke confrontation is some sort of theatrical imperative. This is supposed to persuade me—I'm not a person but part of a mass audience to be manipulated. Second, the great moral authority by which they KNOW what is right and wrong. . . .

I then wrote Rostow a letter, in which I mentioned the incident. This was his reply:

> It was good of you to write about the session on the Vietnam negotiations, distorted by the small assertive radical group. I was touched by your friend's concern, but also troubled that she found it such a disturbing occasion.
>
> I have seen such groups operate in so many places, here and abroad, that I am somewhat hardened. Although the Vietnam controversy has brought this kind of thing to the surface in a systematic way, there is, I think, a certain number of human beings in every generation who react to controversy in this totalitarian way; who believe the rightness of their views lifts from them all need for restraint; who, in short, lose a sense that means are important as well as ends.
>
> The worst of it is the contempt for the majority implicit in their position. My first direct, rather than observed, insight into this frame of mind was a Communist attempt to take over a liberal club at Yale, of which I was a member. They counted on—even encouraged—low attendance to elect their own people. We rallied the majority, out-voted them, and they fragmented off.
>
> The real task, dramatised in our little Vietnam meeting, is how to protect the interests of the majority while continuing to respect also the rights of the minority. It takes organisation and leadership to do that.
>
> In any case, the meeting was, I assure you, quite mild and orderly compared to some I have survived. The main cost was to distort the subject matter from the complexities of the current Vietnam negotiation—which interested the majority—to a rather pedestrian rehearsal of old debates about the Vietnam position as a whole.

Before the end of my first year at Sussex I was to see the same sort of disregard for free speech in England.

A MEMBER OF THE American Studies faculty at the University invited Samuel P. Huntington, a Harvard professor and former State Department adviser, to speak. Huntington was to have lectured on successive days to two small groups of students; his topics involved the American military and foreign affairs, and U.S. policies towards developing countries (not specifically Viet Nam, as R. H. S. Crossman mistakenly stated in the box accompanying Silber's ENCOUNTER article). Although Huntington's scheduled appearance was publicised at the beginning of the term, in the ordinary list of Sussex lectures, it caused no concern until a short time before his arrival. Then the Sussex "Indo-China Solidarity Committee", a small group of radical students, escalated the issue. They deliberately distorted Huntington's past role as a government consultant and his present position on Viet Nam. The campaign included *ad hominem* attacks on the integrity of Rupert Wilkinson, the academic who originally invited Huntington, and Cunliffe, one of the too few who had the courage to support the invitation.

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The dispute centred on Huntington's alleged advocacy of "forced-draft urbanisation" in Viet Nam. In a 1968 *Foreign Affairs* essay, "The Bases of Accommodation," Huntington noted that American bombing of rural areas held by the Viet Cong had driven a massive number of peasants into cities controlled by Saigon. He said that this population shift was due to the Americans "drastically and brutally" increasing their military operations. He remarked that the policy had inadvertently been an "effective response" to Viet Cong domination of the countryside.

But when anti-war protesters in the United States characterised this observation as a recommendation, Huntington denied that his description had been intended as a prescription. He was merely making factual statements, he argued, based upon the admittedly unpleasant realities of the South-east Asia situation, as he perceived them. He was trying to direct attention to objective considerations that would have to be taken into serious account in order to reach a political settlement—not a military victory. According to Huntington, the only advice he offered was that the United States should mitigate the social hardships suffered by the urban refugees in Viet Nam and that America should help inaugurate an honestly elected government in which all parties, including the Viet Cong, could participate.

In a 1967 State Department report, which incorporated these suggestions, Huntington urged Washington to reduce or abandon its attempt to expand the Saigon régime's authority over rural areas ruled by the Viet Cong, and to devise a peace programme to accommodate both sides. At no time, in his own words, did he ever counsel the American government "on the military strategy, tactics, or operations of the Viet Nam War." In fact, during the 1968 Presidential campaign Huntington advised Hubert Humphrey to make a public statement guaranteeing an end to all bombing in Viet Nam. Humphrey, unfortunately, ignored the recommendation; and Nixon, with his vague assurances of a "peace with honour," won the election. The war, and American bombing, lasted another four years.[7]

IN OPPOSING HUNTINGTON'S scheduled appearance the Sussex "Indo-China Solidarity Committee" contravened the Student Union free speech principle, a right upheld by an overwhelming majority ballot some years ago. A Union General Meeting after the Huntington affair—one of the very few (if not the only) quorate meetings of the entire year—voted 284 to 140, with 27 abstentions, to reaffirm their previously established resolution. Anthony Arblaster (whose recent book on academic freedom was mentioned in a quotation alongside Silber's ENCOUNTER article) grossly over-estimates the number of Sussex protesters present at the cancellation of Huntington's lecture. He implies that the auditorium was bursting with demonstrators against the speech. Arblaster says that Huntington was prevented from speaking "by a large crowd which filled the lecture theatre and overflowed outside." I was there at the time,

[7] The information in this and the preceding paragraph is taken from Huntington's letter to the *Harvard Crimson* student newspaper of 25 May 1971 and from Rupert Wilkinson's essay, "Academic Freedom and the Huntington Affair," presented to the University Teachers' Group Conference on "The Idea of Impartiality", Gregynog, Montgomeryshire, 21–23 Sept. 1973.

In a letter to Roy Edgley, a Sussex faculty member opposed to the lecture, Noam Chomsky had this to say about Huntington: "His writings leave absolutely no doubt of his position, and while the left has undoubtedly exaggerated his role—he apparently was nothing more than a minor intellectual apologist for imperial crime rather than an active planner—still there can be no doubt that his views are a sort of intellectualised Eichmannism." Chomsky continued: "Actually, my own feeling is that Huntington shouldn't have been shouted down, on the grounds that even Hitler should have an opportunity to present his case" (*Radical Philosophy*, Spring 1974, p. 23).

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and I can state without qualification that more than two-thirds of those present favoured Huntington's right to speak; the Union vote supports my personal impression.[8]

A tight circle of militant students commandeered the podium and prohibited Huntington's appearance. Rather than risk violence, Wilkinson and Cunliffe adjourned the meeting without introducing Huntington.[9] Later that afternoon, however, Cunliffe enabled members of Wilkinson's American Studies class and a few other students to meet Huntington, and to discuss with him a wide range of issues, including Viet Nam. I attended the private session at Cunliffe's house, where Huntington seriously discussed every question put to him. Not once did he retreat into the silent language of "no comment" (as some people had suggested he would).

One of the side-issues in the controversy was whether Huntington would submit to an open question-and-answer period following his lecture. The anti-war activists at Sussex wanted to confront Huntington on the subject of Viet Nam. In a telephone conversation with Wilkinson, Huntington replied that he had not been invited to speak on that particular topic, and that the Indo-China Solidarity Committee's announced position would probably provoke a "shouting match." This was only two days after the incident in which Dr H. J. Eysenck had been physically assaulted at the London School of Economics. Huntington said that he would be prepared to discuss Viet Nam privately with three or four students. Later he agreed to consider publicly the role of social scientists in government and any questions germane to his speech on the American military and foreign policy. Wilkinson informed the Indo-China Solidarity Committee that Huntington would be willing to respond to inquiries about his personal role if "intelligent language" were used, and that a small discussion group on Viet Nam could be arranged. In none of their propaganda against Huntington did the protesters mention these offers. They continued to misrepresent Huntington as an obstinate and defensive scholar, determined to prevent debate.

IN THE AFTERMATH the Sussex School of English and American Studies passed two motions. One deplored the "betrayal of the value of free speech and discussion" and proposed an inquiry into "morally acceptable means" of "preventing any such betrayal in future." The other offered an apology to the organisers of the lecture, to those who intended to hear it, and to Huntington himself. A motion to censure faculty who actively opposed Huntington's right to lecture failed.

Meanwhile, the Sussex administration circulated a note asking members of the University to identify those responsible for the disruption. One academic sent in his own name. And the memo was printed in the student newspaper, where it was compared to Watergate and ridiculed as "crude, down-to-earth spying, sneaking and story telling", a "mealy-mouthed" example of liberal rhetoric. The statement was signed by the newly-elected Student Union President, who happened to be a member of the Communist Party. He warned that "any action taken against any member of this University, be they student or staff, will result in a situation which will make the Huntington affair look like a picnic." On the same day that the Union reaffirmed the right of free speech on campus, those present voted unanimously to oppose any punitive measures contemplated by the University authorities. And indeed, no disciplinary action was ever taken.[10]

NOW WHAT DID the anti-war activists at Sussex think they had accomplished? Stephen Yeo, one of the faculty members involved, listed three aims: to emphasise "the odious policies" of the United States in Viet Nam; to stress "the ideology of 'value freedom' and academic objectivity in the name of which such policies have been advocated by numerous American academics"; and to assert "the personal moral responsibility of individual academics for barbarous (and vicarious) American imperialism in Asia." No one was naive enough to suggest that opposition to Huntington would put an end to the American presence in South-east Asia or to academic involvement in government. The protest was more in the nature of a public-relations exercise, intended (as one student wrote, having just acquired yesterday's fashionable rhetoric) to raise the "consciousness" of other students and society at large.[11] British students tend to be concerned primarily—not unlike some of Cromwell's Puritans—with psychological preparedness for a once and future revolution, and not with practical solutions to pressing social problems.

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[8] *Unionews*, 19 June 1973, p. 1; Anthony Arblaster, *Academic Freedom* (1974), p. 168.

[9] Throughout the affair the Sussex Indo-China Solidarity Committee disclaimed any violent intent. Only about eleven persons "were contemplating violence, and these the S.I.S.C. felt themselves quite capable of controlling" (*Unionews*, 19 June 1973, p. 1). Yet the student newspaper also said that Huntington's lecture was cancelled "because the audience was getting out of control", and referred to an "unfortunate professor of English who was mistaken for Huntington and sustained a direct hit from a well-aimed flour bomb" (*Unionews*, 7 June, p. 1).

[10] *The Bulletin* of the University of Sussex, 20 June 1973, p. 1; *Unionews*, 12 June 1973, p. 1.

[11] *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 15 June 1973, p. 8; *Unionews*, 12 June 1973, p. 3.

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Dissent in America—and I was a committed participant in it—has inevitably been coloured by a more Jeffersonian notion of political change. Protesters have (mostly) concentrated on particular attitudes and practical issues, not on general consciousness and theoretical speculation. They have tried to correct specific mistakes and abuses. They have attempted to maintain and improve a system that would insure undogmatic decision-making through orderly controversy. They have, in a word, devoted themselves to reform, not revolution.

In terms of the Viet Nam war, what did they accomplish? Their direct action helped lead to President Johnson's retirement, the withdrawal of half-a-million troops, a permanent halt to the bombing, the end of conscription, a more flexible law regarding conscientious objection; and in some universities, to the termination of student military training and secret government research. These successes are a tribute to their realistic appraisal of the situation. By and large, American protesters simply chose appropriate means to achieve limited ends.

IN CONTRAST, what did the Sussex protesters who prevented Huntington's appearance actually accomplish? I think it is fair to say that they merely alienated fellow students and faculty, and other citizens, many of whom shared their anti-Viet Nam views. Instead of "raising consciousness", they lowered it. A pro-Free Speech leaflet distributed after the cancellation of Huntington's lecture put the matter this way:

> Following recent action it is clear that individual members of the Union are not to be free to weigh the evidence for themselves. It is now a minority group who have set themselves up as the sole arbiters of truth—indeed, so sure are they of the righteousness of their case, that they give us a very simplified and biased view of the case. They can do this because they are not interested in helping us make up our minds, but in making up our minds *for us.*

And a letter in the student newspaper contained this comment:

> The ridiculous Indo-China Solidarity Committee has probably done its cause more harm than good by leading this campaign of censorship, since no one can now know exactly what Huntington is like, nor what his ideas are. Instead, in the eyes of most people, he has in effect been martyred by intolerant students, with the result that people can now sympathise with him. It would have been far better to let the man speak, and then to defeat his ideas, using brain rather than brawn so that reports would have been about a sick American professor whose ideas were shown up to be completely wrong by the well-reasoned arguments of sensible students. Or is that too difficult for the Committee's members, even though they have right on their side?

Academic dissenters in Britain do themselves and others a disservice by over-estimating their positive influence on public opinion. They tend to assume that direct action, motivated in the interest of a moral purpose defined by themselves, will necessarily solidify support. When others object to their impractical tactics, the protesters conveniently dismiss them as "bourgeois hypocrites," "wish-washy liberals," or "fascists."

AT THREE VERY DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES—TCU, UT-Austin, and Sussex—I have seen persons arrogate to themselves the authority to suppress free speech. In one instance the administration kept anti-war activists from using campus facilities as a forum; in the others students and faculty prevented academics, previously employed by the American government as foreign-policy advisers, from speaking. On each occasion those opposed to prior censorship were most offended by the contempt with which a few self-appointed proctors decided who should hear what, as if the listeners were mentally and morally deficient. And in each case there was no effective institutional mechanism to discipline those who violated the rights of others.

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LETTERS

"Amerenglish"

IAN M. BALL's "Amerenglish" [ENCOUNTER, October] was amusing and well done, considering that he is originally from Australia. Apparently, though, his eighteen years in the U.S. have been spent in the New York City area, where there are speech patterns that should not be confused with what is called "General American." Even so, I found his observations generally accurate. Only in the following would I make some clarifications:

1. A hill is *not* a grade in America. I have lived in the Midwest, on the Pacific Coast, in the Southeast, and on the Atlantic Seaboard, and I spent twenty years in the Army in close association with men from all parts of the country; and I have never, to my recollection, heard anyone refer to a hill as a grade. As for the word "gradient," perhaps some *would* be perplexed by the term, it being usually used here for technical purposes. I suspect that most Americans understand "grade" to refer to the degree of inclination of a road from the horizontal, as a 1 : 10 grade (or gradient).

2. The term "gear-shift" (without the hyphen, however) may be used in advertising literature, or perhaps in some automotive technical manuals, but the most common term is certainly "shift lever" (which is also the term used in my 1967 Oldsmobile service manual). Often the term is shortened to just "shift." I suppose that all of the modern variations derive from "gear-shift lever."

3. Mr Ball is right about our use of "apartment" for "flat"; but this substitution is recent. When I was a boy I lived in several flats, as such. For me, apartments were fancy flats that sophisticated Easterners occupied in the movies (er, cinema). My hunch is that real estate agents of my generation had the same feeling I did about flats: they were for poor people, and realtors, being salesmen, are responsible for the prevalence today of the more high-toned term. At any rate, flats were around at least into the late thirties.

4. The "pope's nose" is a new one on me. Must come from an "in" joke.

5. The Simplified Spelling Board didn't quite make it with "cigaret," which is much less common than "cigarette" (as on the pack itself). Also, "catalogue," "theatre," and "sulphur" are still with us, if no longer dominant.

6. Twice Mr Ball referred to some kind of "diphthong" lack in the U.S., and I don't quite see what he means. We speak with lots of diphthongs here: "time," "house," "low," "coil," etc. Perhaps Mr Ball's references were to spellings rather than pronunciations, in which case he should have said "digraphs" rather than "diphthongs." We have dropped *some* digraphs, as in "encyclopedia," but we still write "Oedipus," "phoenix," "Aesop," and numerous other one-syllable digraphs, not to mention such common spellings as "tree," "boat," "taut," etc. (I omit the consonantal digraphs, as Mr Ball seems to be speaking of vowels.)

These small criticisms are not meant to disparage Mr Ball's observational acumen, which is obviously high, but only to touch up the picture where there was insufficient light on his canvas.

DONALD O. HALGREN

St. Paul,
Minnesota

"Zenophobic"

I WAS GREATLY pained to find a misspelling of "xenophobic" in ENCOUNTER (July issue, p. 42, three lines from end of page).

But what interests me most is to know whether the original misspelling occurred in *The Times*.

COLIN CLARK

Monash University,
Victoria, Australia

[We are afraid that the error was ours: our printers, and then our own proofreading. *The Times*, from whom we quoted, had it right, and so did *Hansard*. We were presumably entranced by the punning association of "zero-philiac" and "xenophobia." It was an innocent kind of guilt, as Zeno of Elea pointed out in a famous paradox which led originally to "zenophobia."—*Ed Note*]

Milton and Comenius

THE EXCHANGE in the letters column between Melvyn Rogers and Jacques Barzun (April) in which they discuss differences in the educational ideas of Milton and Comenius reaffirms that the fundamental problems of education are as ancient as the notion of education itself. Three such problems are alluded to by Messrs. Rogers and Barzun: Heredity *v.* Environment, Concrete *v.* Abstract learning, and Structured *v.* Unstructured curricula.

Each generation alters the terminology and conceptualises these issues somewhat differently. But the issues remain the same, and today agreement as to their solution remains as elusive as ever. I, for one, am grateful for this for I see no way to solve these fundamental questions in our present state of ignorance regarding the nature of the human being. The only way society can come to an agreement on these questions is to accept some unifying conceptual and value formulation. This can not occur in a valid manner today inasmuch as our present knowledge base is insufficient. Therefore, the only prospect for agreement is that it occur as the result of coercion or mind-numbing propaganda. Better we muddle in continued uncertainty than come to this.

WESLEY MILLER

Department of Education,
Queens College,
Flushing, N.Y.

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Life & Letters Today

London

YORKSHIRE ACCENT: *The influences of broadcasting and television on language are obviously a force making for standardisation in pronunciation and speech patterns. Yet, no institution has done more to preserve dialect than the BBC often in the face of public opposition. One remembers the fury generated during the war when for a few weeks Mr Wilfred Pickles was a newsreader. How could you believe the BBC news delivered in a Yorkshire accent?*

By a paradox, it was precisely his Yorkshire accent that guaranteed Mr J. B. Priestley's trustworthiness. How reconcile the difference in attitude? I think because news is "official" and therefore requires a special universally recognised, "official" voice to deliver it, whereas Mr Priestley's as it were private messages were reinforced by his private, dialectical speech.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York City

CLEAN-UP: A chimney sweep's life has changed over the years. Today's techniques are subtler, smoother, safer. The modern sweep measures his soot removal in tons instead of bagfuls. He plumbs the depths of massive boilers and of industrial chimneys as high as 300 feet.

Moreover, he regards himself as more than just a garbage man of the rooftop. He thinks of himself as an ecologist or flueologist or air-pollution-control specialist.

WALL ST. JOURNAL

Paris

FRANGLAIS, AGAIN: *The French Government will today make another effort to banish* franglais*—the use of anglicisms in spoken and written French. It will order that some 350 pure French words must be used in Government departments instead of words of "Anglo-Saxon" origin.*

The Official Gazette will publish the findings of a commission on terminology set up in 1970 by M. Chaban-Delmas, the former Prime Minister.

With the blessing of the French Academy, which is notorious for being about 50 years behind the times when considering normal usage, the commission will list 350 French words which should be substituted throughout the Civil Service, including the State radio and television.

With superb inconsequence, the commission announces that a "tanker" must in future be a navire citerne, *but that a pipeline shall remain a pipeline provided that it is pronounced as* peepleen.

The commission attacked the areas of show business, television, transport and space technology, and among the most commonly-used English words to be banned from television are "flashback," "one-man show" and "hit parade." These will be replaced respectively by rétrospectif, spectacle solo, *and* palmarès.

The computer terms "hardware" and "software" are regretfully retained as having no possible French equivalents. The same applies to "marketing."

Some English words occur in French often with altered meanings. Members of the terminology commission live in apartments of grand standing *(i.e. exclusive). Rugby players score* un drop, *boxers are sometimes* knockouté *and Paris is filled with* drugstores.

Military experts and businessmen declare that insistence on inventing French terms for technical words which are used universally in English can only result in mistakes and losses.

The entry of Britain and Ireland into the Common Market has caused widespread alarm among Paris purists, since it is feared that English will gradually oust French as the most convenient language of communication.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

POLISH REPOLISHED: *Penguin's* Polish Phrase Book, *published last year, contained mistakes, some of which could confuse tourists. A letter from Anna Maria Misiurewicz claims that the 217-page book contains 50 errors.*

A Penguin secretary said: "That's terrible", when she heard, but the editor of the phrase books division, Jill Norman, was away. So was her assistant and her secretary.

Among the errors claimed by Miss Misiurewicz is the muddling of the word for a car radiator hose with the word for a garden hose, which would make things difficult if the radiator hose needed replacing. The Polish for "drive carefully" is mistranslated as "dead end". Most alarming, the phrase "Is it dangerous to bathe here?" is translated into Polish as "Is it safe to bathe here?" which could cause perilous misunderstandings.

A public relations man said errata slips would be issued.

THE TIMES

New York City

REPRESSION: Sigmund Freud has written the introduction for a brand-new book, but it took some international sleuthing to bring it about. Because St Martin's Press, the publisher, and Richard Ashley, the author, wanted *Cocaine* to be the definitive work on the drug, they knew that Freud's *On the General Effects of Cocaine* had to be included. When Mr Ashley consulted *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* in the New York Public Library, he found that the relevant pages had been ripped out. Nor could St Martin's representative find the pages in London. The solution, of course, lay in Vienna, and when *Cocaine* is released January 15 ($6.95), according to the publisher, the introduction will be a translation from Freud's original papers.

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

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"Galileos, Keplers & Newtons"

STEPHEN TOULMIN'S insightful comments, in "The Alexandrian Trap" (ENCOUNTER, January) make evident how imperative it is that we develop and use perspectives afforded by the comparative historical sociology of science if we are "to achieve a new understanding of the interrelations between Science... and the broader nature of the society within which it is carried on" (p. 68).

But a brief comparison of Toulmin's "The Alexandrian Trap" and his earlier paper on "The Background of the Anti-Science Movement" (*Ciba Foundation Symposium* No. 1, 1971) illustrates the necessity for well-informed and serious students of the present intellectual crisis to repair to insights offered by those who have been labouring in the field of the comparative historical sociology.

The fate and fortunes of the scientific enterprises—as seen from this perspective—must be viewed not only as products of *national* goals and aspirations, but also within the context of forces operating in the larger constellations of societies whose identities are shaped by their underlying theological, philosophical, and legal conceptions.

Not only did the Chinese civilisation fail to yield its complement of Galileos, Keplers, and Newtons (as Toulmin cites Needham to remind us), but also the civilisation of Islam—rising to great heights of scientific vigour at the end of the Alexandrian collapse—failed to bring about this achievement. These cases, as well as the present malaise in the science of the West, make it evident that (1) scientific vigour, once achieved, is by no means an irreversible outcome; and (2) the context of "public relations" and better communication and social responsibility, finds itself at the periphery of the crucial nexus between the cultural and rational foundations of science. Is it not the case that scientists and Utopian thinkers *at least* since the 13th century have made greater claims for scientific knowledge than they were ever able to deliver?

It may interest readers of ENCOUNTER to know that these problems in the comparative historical sociology of science have been discussed by Dr Benjamin Nelson in several places in recent years. Of greatest significance would be his "Sciences and Civilizations: 'East' and 'West': Joseph Needham and Max Weber" (*Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, Vol. XI, 1974); "On the Shoulders of the Giants of the *Comparative* Historical Sociology of 'Science'—in Civilizational Perspective" (in R. Whitley, ed., *Social Processes of Scientific Development*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974); and "The Early Modern Revolution in Science and Philosophy" (*Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, vol. III: 1–40, 1967).

TOBY E. HUFF
Southeastern Massachusetts University, North Dartmouth, Mass.

"Humeur Noire", or the Big Black Put-On

PROFESSOR ROBERT WILLIAMS *believes that standardised tests tend to say less about the skills, aptitudes and intelligence of blacks than they do about whites. Seeking to devise a test that is either culturally neutral or biased in favour of the black American culture, he has come up with the "BITCH" exam—Black Intelligence Test of Cultural Homogeneity.*

Interviewed by telephone at Washington University of St Louis, where he is a professor of psychology and head of the Black Studies programme, Mr. Williams insisted that he is serious. He said that he "didn't set out to devise a test that blacks would score higher on than whites, but I knew it would happen." In fact, that result seems to be the major point of the test.

Some sample multiple-choice questions in the examination:

"Alley apple" means (A) brick, (B) piece of fruit, (C) dog, (D) horse.

"Crib" means (A) an apartment, (B) a game, (C) a job, (D) hot stuff.

"Nose opened" means (A) flirting, (B) teed off, (C) deeply in love, (D) very angry.

("Alley apple" is a brick, specifically a brick as a missile, actual or potential; "crib" is an apartment, house or other domicile, as in "he has a dynamite crib!"; "nose opened" is deeply in love, or at least emotionally involved to a significant degree, as: "Man, they're not just dating; she's really got his nose open!")

A total of 94 of the 100 test questions require knowledge of black slang. The remaining six ask the identity and authorship of the Negro National Anthem, the common handicap of Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder, Malcolm X's original last name, the identity of various hair pomades, and the uses of vaseline.

When the test is administered to racially mixed groups, according to Professor Williams, the results form "a bimodal curve," which means that almost all Blacks do better than almost all Whites. He said the test was "designed to serve as a moderator variable to validate or invalidate low IQ scores." What he is saying is that a child from the black ghetto can score poorly on a standardised IQ test without necessarily being stupid. For example, if a child makes a high score on the BITCH test, Professor Williams assumes at least average intelligence, no matter what the child's standardised IQ score may be.

THE MAJOR SHORTCOMING *of the BITCH test seems to be that it tells nothing about the test-taker's ability to conceptualise, or to reason, or to interpret words or other symbols. It may, unless it is administered orally, provide some small indication of reading ability. But it is almost totally a vocabulary test, and a test in ghetto slang vocabulary, at that.*

Professor Williams bristles at the word "slang." "Jump sharp" (to dress attractively)," deuce-and-a-quarter" (a Buick Electra 225) and "T.C.B."

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Silber's "Academe"

I GREATLY ENJOYED John Silber's fine article "Poisoning the Wells of Academe" in your August issue. It deals with unusual clarity with some of the really serious problems of contemporary higher education. I should like, however, to question the manner in which Dr Silber introduces into his discussion the question of academic tenure, for he seems to impute responsibility to the tenure system for faults in contemporary academic life which have no demonstrable causal connection with the tenure system as such.

Dr Silber enters the subject of tenure after offering some undeniably shocking examples of unabashed lying by academics in public statements. The difficulty comes in saying that tenure "may encourage academic license and abuse." It may indeed; but surely it is not the institution of tenure that is at fault. It is rather the particular social and political ideas that justify lying for a "good" cause and that lead their advocates to exploit the traditions of academic freedom, including the tenure system, with scant respect either for the traditions or for the educational institutions within which they operate. Perhaps Dr Silber, whose logic is otherwise impeccable, succumbs here to the illogic of those he attacks by confusing the issue of academic tenure with that of political freedom, thus appearing to justify a revision of tenure, with the statement that "the academic neither needs nor deserves a greater protection for his political freedom than that afforded the ordinary citizen." It is not political freedom which tenure is designed to protect. And if academics claim its protection inappropriately, one ought surely to aim one's critical fire at the criminal rather than his hostage.

There is a similar logical flaw, I feel, in Dr Silber's criticisms of recent attitudes and practices in academic evaluation and grading. I share his concern and endorse his criticisms. But I doubt that the problem can be attributed to "our unmoderated American standard of academic freedom. . . ." Most of the examples he offers are the product of specific social and education philosophies, and only a direct critical encounter with these philosophies—notably absent from the academic scene—can deal with the problem. The isolated faculty rebel—declaring his own grading pattern in defiance of established college or university patterns—is surely less dangerous than the general laxity of grading standards, or the acceptance by whole faculties of grading schemes that repudiate the very concept of scholarly excellence.

HERBERT J. ELLISON
Institute for Comparative and Foreign Area Studies, University of Washington

(to take care of business, meaning specifically to make love, but also to do anything with virtuosity) are not slang expressions, he said, but merely aspects of communication in the Black Culture.

Slang, on the other hand, is a white put-down of black communicative expressions, he said. If a black person makes up a word—"uptight" for instance—it is deemed to be slang. If a white person makes up a word—"astronaut" for example—it becomes an entry in the next dictionary.

THE SUSPICION PERSISTS *that the BITCH test is a child of whimsy or that it at least was conceived that way. When Professor Williams first came up with the idea, back in 1970, BITCH stood for "Black Intelligence Test Counterbalanced for Honkies."*

But when he revised it in 1972, he changed the name. He said it is doing very nicely these days.

The District of Columbia public school system, whose children have not fared well of late on standardised tests, has ordered a batch of BITCH tests. Clearly some local officials take it seriously. So, apparently, does the Association of Black Psychologists, which last week gave Mr Williams its "distinguished psychologist" award. Professor Williams is a founder of the association.

William Raspberry
in the WASHINGTON POST

Mishan's Inflation

STRUCTURAL and institutional theories of inflation are ever "new" and seductive, because they play upon class bias. Labour blames profits, Business blames wages, and the Government quietly steals a bigger slice from both. In fact, structural factors display an essentially random connection with inflation in various times and places. Nor can we all be "importing" inflation, since somebody must be exporting it. South Korea and Indonesia are both heavily dependent on trade, yet their inflation rates are radically different.

According to E. J. Mishan ["The New Inflation," May], wage rates are whatever workers want. Pay claims are allegedly determined by emulation, anticipated inflation, payroll taxes, and literature which favours growth. Inflation is twice as high as only a decade ago because workers "claim" twice as much pay. If tomorrow they claim one hundred times as much, the inflation rate will rise a hundred-fold. The market, on this view, places no constraint on wage demands.

But the only way that people can be receiving higher money incomes—in total—is if there is more money to go around. Otherwise, it goes in one person's pocket and out of someone else's. Nationalised or municipalised services are indeed more vulnerable to a strike threat, as Mishan says; but this does not explain how a generally higher level of nominal wages can be funded. If the widget-makers union has a relative advantage, those who buy widgets will have less money left over with which to bid up the prices of other goodies. If many refrain from buying over-priced widgets, resources will be released to increase the

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supply and lower the price of other things. In short, whoever gets relatively more money is exactly offset by whoever paid for his services (ultimately, consumers and taxpayers).

Mishan has inadvertently discovered the twenty-second economic fallacy: the fallacy of composition.

ALAN REYNOLDS
Associate Editor
National Review,
New York City

Loaded Words

EVERYBODY at some time has probably felt blood pressure rise and pulse pound when loaded words have been used to diminish him. The labourer who is called "a hardhat", the poor white who is called "a redneck," the black man who is called "boy", the intellectual who is called "an egghead", the liberal who is called "a bleeding heart", the policeman who is called "a pig"—all these and many others are painfully aware how brutally the English language can be used to humiliate them.

In such instances, words become weapons. The words' victims see English as an enemy to be disarmed, and when they acquire political muscle, one of their first goals commonly is to purge the language.

THIS IS WHAT FEMINISTS *are now struggling to do in their assault on the heavily masculine freight that has been built into English from the time of the Angles, the Saxons and the Normans. When sensible adults are called "the weaker sex", or "the girls", they are apt to feel at least mildly ridiculed, and possibly assaulted.*

Hearing men refer to "the little woman", "the better half", "the ball and chain", or "a sweet young thing" may make them suspect they are being crushed in a velvet vice. Not surprisingly, then, the feminist movement is heavily engaged in a language purge.

It is not easy once they get beyond putting the taboo on "weaker sex", "ball and chain", "sweet young thing" and similar clichés, which were ready for retirement anyhow, for masculine primacy is deeply entrenched in English.

Some of the difficulties are illustrated in McGraw-Hill's "guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Co. publications", an admirable analysis of how firmly modern English confines women to the masculine mentality. The author, Timothy Yohn, describes the mental trap very persuasively but is less successful in suggesting how to break out.

THE MOST AWKWARD PROBLEM arises with all those words that are compounds of "man." Yohn tackles "congressman" and suggests "member of Congress" as a better alternative. His "businessman" becomes "business executive" or "business manager." His "fireman" is a "fire-fighter"; his "mailman" a "mail-carrier"; his "salesman" a "sales representative", "salesperson" or "sales clerk"; his "insurance man" an "insurance agent"; his "statesman" a "leader" or "public servant"; his chairman a "presiding officer", "the chair," "head", "leader", "coordinator" or "moderator"; his "cameraman" a "camera operator"; and his "foreman" a "supervisor."

In almost every case the alternative for the "sexist" word to be purged is either a longer word or a combination of words. Instead of "sexism", we have verbosity.

THE TROUBLE WITH *most of Yohn's "nonsexist" alternatives—although "fire-fighter" isn't bad—is that they abolish "man" only to bring on a Latin-root substitute, and Latin-root words tend to be not only pompous but also vague and long-winded.*

"Sales representatives", "business executives", "coordinators", "moderators," "camera operators" and "supervisors" sound suspiciously like salesmen, businessmen, chairmen, cameramen and foremen who are giving themselves airs, in the manner of those bureaucrats who invariably prefer to "utilize" things instead of just using them.

Feminists with a classic turn of mind might even object that the "-or" endings on "operator", "supervisor", "moderator" and "coordinator" smack heavily of the masculine "-or" ending common on Latin nouns and are, thus, merely "sexist" words concealed in a toga.

IDEALLY, SOMEONE WOULD INVENT brand new words that are devoid of gender implications in their job descriptions without weighting the language down like lead settling into swamp water. A scouring of the dictionaries might even turn up some good old words that would serve.

YOHN SUGGESTS *one when, in cautioning against "language that assumes all readers are male," he rules out "you and your wife" and suggests, instead, "you and your spouse." The trouble with "spouse" is that nobody but a lawyer can say it with a straight face. It belongs to W. C. Fields and dry wits in sawdust saloons, and in the plural who could resist saying, "you and your spice"?*

Why not "you and your mate", Mr. Yohn? "Mate" has the strength of one unequivocal syllable. It also has sex in it, without gender, and that's what we are looking for, isn't it?

Russell Baker
in the INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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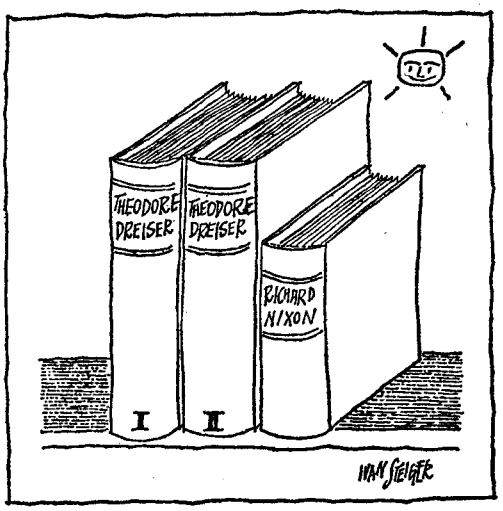
"American Tragedy"



I have read the whole of Henry Fairlie's long brilliant essay on "Watergate" [ENCOUNTER, October] but it still reduces itself to the message of the enclosed simple cartoon—an American Tragedy.

J. L. B. PHILLIPS

Oxford

Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno

MAY I congratulate you on your October issue which, once more, presents what in my view is the happiest combination of intellectual seriousness, shrewdness, and readability in the bookstalls. However, printing mistakes like "Weisengrund" on p. 47 should definitely not be allowed to happen, however negligible their effect on the enjoyment of your magazine.

Essen DIETER BIRNBACKER

[We apologise to all our German readers for the sabotage by that old Teutonic character *der Druckerteufel.*—ED. NOTE.]

The New Inflation

"THAT WORKERS MUST LEARN that wages cannot rise faster than the rate of *national* productivity is obvious," says Professor Helfgott ("Letters", ENCOUNTER, October).

Many people, whilst agreeing wholeheartedly with Professor Helfgott, will wonder why the necessity of learning this essential lesson has not been more insisted on in the past two or three decades by editors of serious papers, journalists and politicians of any or every colour. That it still has to be learned in many quarters is only too deplorably obvious.

If it had been assimilated say twenty-five years ago, then, the workers of Great Britain might have gone on to learn lesson No. 2, that increases in national productivity are most rapidly achieved by willing and unstinted cooperation between the different human *factors* in industry, *entrepreneurs*, management and work-force. Failure to learn this second lesson is, probably, the main cause of Britain's decline from near the top of the European wages-league to a place well down in the ruck.

T. C. OWTRAM

Villa Belvedere,
Gragnano (Lucca)

Henry Fairlie's Watergate

HENRY FAIRLIE'S ARTICLE in the October issue on "Lessons of Watergate: An essay on the possibility of morality in politics," is the most *superb* analysis of the state of American politics today. It really has been valid as an analysis since the time you first began publication, and it will remain so for many years to come.

It deserves the widest dissemination possible. I've sent a copy to a friend of mine in the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army and to Sen. Frank Church of Idaho with the suggestion that it be printed in the *Congressional Record.*

I hope you make reprints of it available so I can send copies to friends. The GOP under Ford is now a Disaster Area, and the Democrats may snatch defeat from victory for the reasons Fairlie gives.

JAMES E. HEWES, Jr.

Arlington,
Virginia

Teller and the Bomb

IT IS REGRETTABLE that Professor Golo Mann's otherwise excellent article ("Last Thoughts on the 'Generation Gap' ", ENCOUNTER, September) is marred by gratuitous and misleading references to Professor Edward Teller. They reflect a widespread myth of the nuclear age, namely that Professor Teller supported the dropping of the atom bomb over a Japanese city and thus was among those responsible for this "crime" (in Professor Mann's terminology). This is not so. Teller was opposed to this decision; however, the recommendations of other and more influential scientists prevailed.

GEORGE SZASZ

Kilchberg,
Switzerland

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Cleaning Out the Rubbish

PROFESSOR JOHN PASSMORE [ENCOUNTER, April] says that he thinks it's by the "joint efforts" of scientists, technologists, economists, statesmen and administrators that we will solve the ecological crisis. Surely, these are the people who CREATED the crisis and it is the people who must solve it. Luckily for them and Professor Passmore, anybody is the people, anybody and everybody. Try to do it from the top in the time-honoured way and something else gets done instead—usually the people.

No doubt your magazine is never going to take much of a stand against "élitism" except, one suspects, to banish the use of such a trendy, fashionable and "therefore" meaningless epithet from usage—but maybe a little down to earth (nearly said grass-roots dammit) thinking about the true nature of all our inter-related problems might ease your intellectual burden even if it also eases you out of a nice little job, or two.

TOMMY BAXTER

London

South African Words

LAURENCE LERNER'S very fine parody of fashionable anti-*apartheid* writing ("A Kind of Family Reunion," ENCOUNTER, May 1974), loses a little of its effectiveness by being too obvious and by the misuse of three words.

The word "*Rooinek*" is not used to describe "rural Afrikaners" but, in fact, to insult Britishers. British soldiers during the Boer War found the sun too severe for their fair northern complexions and had endless trouble with their red necks.

"*Blackveld*" is never used here. I think Professor Lerner means "*backveld*", more or less equivalent in meaning to the Australian out-back. This is used as an insult for "rural Afrikaners."

Lastly, the name "*koelie*" is mostly applied to "Asiatics" (the words used to describe Indians in South Africa), and is only very infrequently used as Professor Lerner uses it, to describe Cape Coloureds.

But for these few small errors the piece was remarkably pointed and thoroughly appreciated by one who is so tired of stock anti-South Africa sentiment.

C. L. BAM

Randburg,
South Africa

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AUTHORS

William Trevor's latest book of short stories is *The Ballroom of Romance*. His novel *Elizabeth Alone* appeared in 1973 (Bodley Head). . . .

Norman Cohn is Astor-Wolfson Professor in the University of Sussex. His books include *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957) and *Warrant for Genocide* (1967). *Europe's Inner Demons*, from which his article in this issue is an excerpt, will be published for Sussex University Press by Heinemann Educational Books and Chatto & Windus and by Basic Books in New York, early in 1975. . . .

Anthony Hartley was for several years the editor of *Interplay* in New York, and now works in the office of the European Community in London. His books include *A State of England* (1963) and *Gaullism* (Routledge, 1972). . . .

George Steiner is Professor of Comparative European Literature at the University of Geneva. His latest book, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, will be published early in 1975 by Oxford University Press. . . .

Harry G. Johnson is Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago. His most recent book is *Further Essays in Monetary Economics* (Allen & Unwin, 1973). . . .

John Spurling is a playwright and critic. Two of his plays, *Macrune's Guevara* and *In the Heart of the British Museum*, are published by Calder & Boyars, who will shortly be bringing out a third, *Shades of Heathcliff*. He is co-author of *Beckett: A Study of His Plays* (Eyre Methuen). . . .

Benedict Nightingale is theatre critic of the *New Statesman*. He is the author of *Charities* (Allen Lane, 1973), and is a member of the Arts Council's New Drama Committee. . . .

Alan Brownjohn is a Lecturer in English at the Battersea College of Education in London. His latest volume of poems is *Warrior's Career* (Macmillan). . . .

Isabel Quigly is a translator and critic, and for ten years reviewed films for *The Spectator*. Her most recent translation is *Living Cinema* by Louis Marcorelles (Allen & Unwin); she is now translating a collection of writings on Fellini, to be published by Eyre Methuen. Her article on "The American as Movie Critic" appeared in the January 1974 ENCOUNTER. . . .

Michael Vannoy Adams is at present a Marshall Scholar in American Studies at the University of Sussex.

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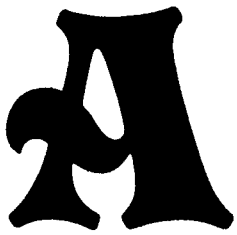

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Sam Waagenaar

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£4·95 **Philip Toynbee,** *The Observer*

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Michael Confino

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James Joll, *The Observer*

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After Babel

Aspects of Language and Translation

George Steiner

There is 'translation' in every act of human speech, for to understand is to interpret. Dr. Steiner's is the first attempt since the eighteenth century at a systematic investigation of the phenomenology and processes of translation, inside language and between languages. His book is a demanding one, which draws on linguistics, psychology, poetics, and philosophy. £8

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General Editor: Nita Watts

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Too Proud to Fight

Woodrow Wilson's Neutrality

Patrick Devlin

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Wole Soyinka

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